POEMS

DESCRIPTIVE, DRAMATIC, LEGENDARY

AND

CONTEMPLATIVE

BY

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IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. II.

I. SOUTHERN PASSAGES AND PICTURES
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SOUTHERN PASSAGES AND PICTURES.

FLIGHT TO NATURE.

Sick of the crowd, the toil, the strife,
Sweet Nature, how I turn to thee,
Seeking for renovated life,
By brawling brook and shady tree!

I knew thy rocks had spells of old,
To soothe the wanderer's woe to calm,
And in thy waters, clear and cold,
My fev'rish brow would seek for balm.

I've bent beneath thy ancient oak,
And sought for slumber in its shade,
And, as the clouds above me broke,
I dream'd to find the boon I pray'd;

For light—a blessed light—was given,
Wide streaming round me from above,
And in the deep, deep vaults of heaven,
There shone, methought, a look of love.

And, through the long, long summer hours,
When every bird had won its wing,
How sweet to think, amidst thy flowers,
That youth might yet renew its spring;—

That sacred season of the heart,
When every pulse with hope is strong,
And, still untaught by selfish art,
Truth fears no guile, and love no wrong.

And who, but nature's self, could yield
The blessing in the prayer I made,
Throned in her realm of wood and field,
Of rocky realm and haunted shade?

Who, but that magic queen, whose sway
Drives winter from his path of strife,
Whilst all her thousand fingers play,
With bud and bird, in games of life!

With these a kindred life I ask,—
Not wealth that mortals vainly seek;
But, in heaven's sunshine let me bask,
My heart as glowing as my cheek;—

An idle heart, that would not heed
That chiding voice, when duty comes,
To drag the soul, but freshly freed,
Back to cold toils and weary glooms.

No lure she finds in mortal schemes,
Which wiser fancies still reprove,—
Far happier in her woodland dreams,
With one sweet teacher, taught by love!

Thou, Nature, that magician be,
Restore each dream that taught the boy,
That warm'd his hope, that made him free,
While wisdom took the shape of joy;

And I will bless thee with a song,
As fond as hers, that idle bird,
That sings above me all day long,
As if she knew I watch'd and heard.

THE BROOKLET.

A LITTLE farther on there is a brook,
Where the breeze loiters ever. The great oaks
Have roof'd it with their arms and affluent leaves,
So that the sunbeam rifles not its fount,
While the shade cools it. You may hear it now,
A low faint murmur, as through pebbly paths,
In soft and sinuous progress it flows on,
In streams that make division as they go,
Still parting, still uniting, in one song,
The sweetest mortals know, of constancy.

Thither, ah, thither, if thy heart be sad!—
That song will bring thee solace. Or, if hope
That may not yet find name for what it seeks,
Inspires thee with a dream whose essence brings
Fruition in its keeping,—still, the strain
That's murmur'd by yon brooklet, is the best,—
Having a voice for fancy at its birth,
That keeps it wakeful on its own sweet wings.
And thou wilt gather, for whatever mood
That makes thee fond or thoughtful, a sweet tone
Beguiling thy best sympathies, and still
Leaving in thy keeping, as thou seek'st thy home,
A kindlier sense of what is in thy path.

Beside these banks, through the whole livelong day,
Ere yet I noted much the flight of time,
And knew him but in ballad books and songs,
Nor cared to know him better,—I have lain,
Nursing delicious reveries that made
All being but a circle of bright flowers,
With love the centre, sov'ran of that realm,
And I a happy inmate, with the rest.
There, with sweet thoughts, all liquid like the stream
That still inspired their progress, clear and bright,
I lay as one who slept, through happy hours,
Unvex'd by din of duty, unrebuked
By chiding counsellor to youthful cares,
That ever seeks to plant on boyish brow
The winter that has silver'd all its own.
And thus, in long delight, with the rapt soul
Shaping its own elysium of the peace
That harbor'd in the solitude, the eye
Grew momently familiar with sweet forms,
That offer'd to the genius of the place,
Making all consecrate to gentleness.
How came the thrush to whistle as he drank,
Heeding not me, and darting through the copse,
Only to bring his loved one on his wing,
To gather like refreshment? Squirrels dropt
Their nuts adown the bankside where I lay,
And, leaping to recover them, ere yet
They rolled into the brooklet and away,
Swept over me, and with fantastic play
Drew up the feathery brush above their heads,—
And their gray orbs, with bright intelligence,
Cast round them, while from hand to hand they frisk'd
The prize, which none might covet but to feed
Such nimble harlequins. The dove at noon

Couch'd in thick bristly covering of the pine,
Sought here its sweet siesta, wooing sleep,
By plaintive iteration of sad notes,
That might be still a sensible happiness :—
And sometimes, meek intruder on my realm,
Through yonder thick emerging, half in light
And half in shadow, stole the timid fawn,
That came down to the basin's edge to drink,
Now lapping, and now turning to the bank,
Cropping the young blade of the coming spring
And heedless, as I lay along unstirr'd,
Of any stranger—sauntering through the shade,
Even where I crouch'd,—having a quiet mood,
And not disturbing, while beholding mine.

Thou smil'st ; and on thy lip the speaking thought
Looks still like censure—deems my hours misspent,
And saddens into warning. A shrewd thought,
I will not combat with an argument,
But leave the worldly policy to boast,
That such an errantry as this life of mine,
Hath found its fit sarcasm, well rebuked.
And yet there is a something in the life
Thou mock'st, as idle still and profligate,
Something to life compensative, and dear
To feelings that are fashion'd not by man.
Ah! the delicious sadness of the hours,
Spent by this brooklet—ah! the dreams they brought,
Of other hopes and beings—the sweet truths,
That still subdued the heart to patientness,
And made all flexible in the youthful will,
That else had been most passionate and rash.
I know the toils that gather on my path,
And I will grapple them with a strength that shows

A love for the encounter, not the less
For hours thus wasted in the solitude,
And fancies born of dreams—and 'twill not more
Impair the resolute courage of my heart,
Wrestling with toil, in conflicts of the race,
If still, in pauses of the fight, I dream
Of this dear idlesse,—gazing on that brook
So sweet in shade, thus singing on its way,
Like some dear child, all thoughtless, as it goes
From shadow into sunlight and is lost.

SABBATH IN THE FOREST.

1. FREEDOM OF THE SABBATH.

Let us escape! This is our holiday—
God's day, devote to rest; and, through the wood
We'll wander, and, perchance, find heavenly food:
So, profitless, it shall not pass away.
'Tis life, but with sweet difference, methinks,
Here, in the forest;—from the crowd set free,
The spirit, like escaping song-bird, drinks
Fresh sense of music from its liberty.
Thoughts crowd about us with the trees—the shade
Holds teachers that await us: in our ear,
Unwonted, but sweet voices do we hear,
That with rare excellence of tongue persuade:
They do not chide our idlesse,—were content,
If all our walks were half so innocent.

FLOWERS AND TREES.

March is profuse in violets—at our feet
They cluster,—not in pride, but modesty;
The damsel pauses as she passes by,
Plucks them with smiles, and calls them very sweet.
But such beguile me not! The trees are mine,
These hoary-headed masters;—and I glide,
Humbled, beneath their unpresuming pride,
And wist not much what blossoms bud or shine.
I better love to see yon grandsire oak,
Old Druid-patriarch, lone among his race,—
With blessing, out-stretch'd arms, as giving grace
When solemn rites are said, or bread is broke:
Decay is at his roots,—the storm has been
Among his limbs,—but the old top is green.

3. THE SAME SUBJECT.

The pine with its green honors; cypress gray,
Bedded in waters; crimsoning with bloom
The maple, that, irreverently gay,
Too soon, methinks, throws off his winter gloom;
The red bud, lavish in its every spray,
Glowing with promise of the exulting spring;
And over all, the laurel, like some king,
Conscious of strength and stature, born for sway.
I care not for their species—never look
For class or order in pedantic book,—
Enough that I behold them—that they lead
To meek retreats of solitude and thought,
Declare me from the world's day-labors freed,
And bring me tidings books have never brought.

4. RELIGIOUS MUSINGS.

The mighty and the massy of the wood
Compel my worship: satisfied I lie,
With naught in sight but forest, earth, and sky,
And give sweet sustenance to precious mood!—
'Tis thus from visible but inanimate things,
We gather mortal reverence. They declare
In silence, a persuasion we must share,
Of hidden sources, spiritual springs,
Fountains of deep intelligence, and powers,
That man himself implores not; and I grow
From wonder into worship, as the show,
Majestic, but unvoiced, through noteless hours,
Imposes on my soul, with musings high,
That, like Jacob's Ladder, lifts them to the sky!

5. SOLACE OF THE WOODS.

Woods, waters, have a charm to soothe the ear,
When common sounds have vex'd it. When the day
Grows sultry, and the crowd is in thy way,
And working in thy soul much coil and care—
Betake thee to the forests. In the shade
Of pines, and by the side of purling streams
That prattle all their secrets in their dreams,
Unconscious of a listener—unafraid—
Thy soul shall feel their freshening, and the truth
Of nature then, reviving in thy heart,
Shall bring thee the best feelings of thy youth,
When in all natural joys thy joy had part,
Ere lucre and the narrowing toils of trade
Had turn'd thee to the thing thou wast not made.

6. POETRY OF THE FOREST.

These haunts are sacred,—for the vulgar mood
Loves not seclusion. Here the very day
Seems in a Sabbath dreaminess to brood:
The groves breathe slumber—the great tree-tops sway
Drowsily, with the idle-going wind;
And sweetest images before my mind
Persuade me into pleasure with their play.
Here, fancies of the present and the past
Delight to mingle, 'till the palpable seems
Inseparate from the glory in my dreams,
And golden with the halo round it cast;
Thus do I live with Rosalind, thus stray
With Jacques; and churning o'er some native rhyme,
Persuade myself it smacks of the old time.

THE LOST PLEIAD.

I.

Nor in the sky,
Where it was seen
So long in eminence of light serene,—
Nor on the white tops of the glistering wave,
Nor down, in mansions of the hidden deep,
Though beautiful in green
And crystal, its great caves of mystery,—
Shall the bright watcher have
Her place, and, as of old, high station keep!

II.

Gone! gone!
Oh! never more, to cheer
The mariner, who holds his course alone
On the Atlantic, through the weary night,
When the stars turn to watchers, and do sleep,
Shall it again appear,
With the sweet-loving certainty of light,
Down shining on the shut eyes of the deep!

III.

The upward-looking shepherd on the hills
Of Chaldea, night-returning, with his flocks,
He wonders why his beauty doth not blaze,
Gladding his gaze,—
And, from his dreary watch along the rocks,
Guiding him homeward o'er the perilous ways!
How stands he waiting still, in a sad maze,
Much wondering, while the drowsy silence fills
The sorrowful vault!—how lingers, in the hope that night
May yet renew the expected and sweet light,
So natural to his sight!

IV.

And lone,
Where, at the first, in smiling love she shone,
Brood the once happy circle of bright stars:
How should they dream, until her fate was known,
That they were ever confiscate to death?
That dark oblivion the pure beauty mars,
And, like the earth, its common bloom and breath,
That they should fall from high;
Their lights grow blasted by a touch, and die,—
All their concerted springs of harmony
Snapt rudely, and the generous music gone!

V.

Ah! still the strain
Of wailing sweetness fills the saddening sky;
The sister stars, lamenting in their pain
That one of the selectest ones must die,—
Must vanish, when most lovely, from the rest!
Alas! 'tis ever thus the destiny.
Even Rapture's song hath evermore a tone
Of wailing, as for bliss too quickly gone.
The hope most precious is the soonest lost,
The flower most sweet is first to feel the frost.
Are not all short-lived things the loveliest?
And, like the pale star, shooting down the sky,
Look they not ever brightest, as they fly
From the lone sphere they blest!

FIRST DAY OF SPRING.

Oh! thou bright and beautiful day,
First bright day of the virgin spring,
Bringing the slumbering life into play,
Giving the leaping bird his wing.

Thou art round me now in all thy hues,
Thy robe of green, and thy scented sweets,
In thy bursting buds, in thy blessing dews,
In every form that my footstep meets.

I hear thy voice in the lark's clear note,
In the cricket's chirp at the evening hour;
In the zephyr's sighs that around me float,
In the breathing bud and the opening flower.

I see thy forms o'er the parting earth,
In the tender shoots of the grassy blade,
In the thousand plants that spring to birth,
On the valley's side in the home of shade.

I feel thy promise in all my veins,
They bound with a feeling long suppress'd,
And, like a captive who breaks his chains,
Leap the glad hopes in my heaving breast.

There are life and joy in thy coming, Spring,
Thou hast no tidings of gloom and death,
But buds thou shakest from every wing,
And sweets thou breathest with every breath.

BALLAD.

By the brooklet, grove and meadow,
Where together once we stray'd,
Do I wander, fond as ever,
Haunting still each secret shade;
And, that thus content I wander,
Where such precious joys were mine,
Do I know that thou art with me,
And my spirit walks with thine.

In the murmur of the brooklet,
Still thy well-known voice I hear,
And the whisper in the tree-top,
Tells me that thy form is near;

Thou hast left me, at departing,
All that earth could never take,
And, still comforted, I wander
Through these shadows for thy sake.

Were I guilty of a passion
Which thy beauty could survive,
Still I feel thy gentle presence
Must the earthly fancy shrive;
And, discoursing with thy spirit,
Oh! I feel that earth has naught
To compensate the forgetting
Of the sweetness thou hast taught.

SONNET.—BY THE SWANANNOA.

Is it not lovely, while the day flows on
Like some unnoticed water through the vale,
Sun-sprinkled,—and, across the fields, a gale,
Ausonian, murmurs out an idle tale,
Of groves deserted late, but lately won?
How calm the silent mountains, that, around,
Bend their blue summits, as if group'd to hear
Some high ambassador from foreign ground,—
To hearken, and, most probably, confound!
While, leaping onward, with a voice of cheer,
Glad as some schoolboy ever on the bound,
The lively Swanannoa sparkles near;—
A flash and murmur mark him as he roves,
Now foaming white o'er rocks, now glimpsing soft through groves.

TO TIME.

Gray monarch of the waste of years,
Mine eyes have told thy steps in tears,
Yet yield I not to feeble fears,
  In watching now thy flight:
The pangs that follow'd still thy blow
Have lost their edge with frequent woe,
And stronger must the courage grow
  That's fed by constant fight.
The neck long used to weighty yoke,
The tree once shiver'd by the stroke,
The heart by frequent torture broke—
  These fear no later blight.

Oh! mine hath been a mournful song,—
My neck hath felt the burden long,—
My tree was shiver'd,—weak and strong,
  Beneath the bolt went down!—
The Fate that thus took early sway,
Hath spared of mine but little prey,
For old and young were torn away,
  Ere manhood's wing had flown;—
I saw the noble sire, who stood
Majestic, as in crowded wood,
The pine—and after him, the brood,
  All perish in thy frown.

So, count my hopes—so, tell my fears,
And ask what now this life endears,
To him who gave, with many tears,
  Each blossom of his love;

Whose store in heaven, so precious grown,
He counts each earthly moment flown,
As loss of something from his own,
  In treasures shrined above.
Denied to seek—to see—his store,
Yet daily adding more and more,
Some precious plant, that, left before,
  The spoiler rends at last.
Not hard the task to number now
The few that live to feel the blow;
The perish'd,—count them on my brow,
  With white hairs overcast.

White hairs—while yet each limb is strong
To help the right and crush the wrong—
Ere youth, in manhood's struggling throng,
  Had well begun his way:—
Thought premature, that still denied
The boy's exulting sports—the pride,
That, with the blood's unconscious tide,
  Knows but to shout and play;
Youth, that in love's first gush was taught
To see his best affection brought
  To tears, and woe, and death,—
While yet the fire was in his eye,
That told of passion's victory,
And, in his ear, the first sweet sigh,
  From beauty's laboring breath.

And manhood now,—and loneliness,—
With, oh! how few to love and bless,
Save those who, in their dear duresse,
  Look down from heaven's high towers;
The stately sire, the gentle dame,

The maid who first awoke the flame,
That gave to both a mutual claim,
  Soon forfeited, as ours—
And all those dearest buds of bloom,
That simply sought on earth a tomb,
From birth to death, with rapid doom,
  A bird-flight wing'd for fate:
How thick the shafts!—how sure the aim!—
What other passion wouldst thou tame,
Oh! Time, within this heart of flame,
  Elastic, not elate?

Is't pride?—methinks 'tis joy to bend;—
My foe—he can no more offend;—
My friend is false;—I love my friend;—
  I love my foeman too!—
'Tis man I love;—nor him alone,
The brute, the bird,—its joy or moan,
Not heedless, to my heart hath gone—
  I feel with all I view.
Wouldst have me worthy?—make me so,
By frequent bruise and overthrow;—
But spare on other hearts the blow,
Spare, from the cruel pang, the woe,
  My innocent—my bright!
On me thy vengeance! 'Tis *my* crime
That needs the scourge, and, in my prime,
'Twere fruitful of improving time,
  Thy hands should not be light.

I bend me willing to the thrall,
Whate'er the doom will bear it all,—
Drink of the bitter cup of gall,
  Nor once complain of thee;

Will poverty avail to chide,
Or sickness bend the soul of pride,
Or social scorn, still evil-eyed ?—
  Have, then, thy will of me !
But spare the woman and the child !—
Let me not see their features mild
Distorted,—hear their accents wild,
  In agonizing pain—
Too much of this !—I thought me sure,
In frequent pang and loss before ;—
I still have something to endure,—
  And tremble, and—refrain !

On every shore they watch thy wing,—
To some the winter, some the spring,
Thou bring'st, or yet art doom'd to bring,
  In rapid-rolling years :
How many seek thee, smiling now,
Who soon shall look with clouded brow,
Heart fill'd with bitter doubt and woe,
  And eyes with gathering tears !—
But late, they fancied,—life's parade
Still moving on,—that, not a shade
Thou flung'st on bower and sunny glade,
  In which they took delight :—
Sharp satirist—methinks I see
Thy glance in sternest mockery ;—
They little think, not seeing thee,
  How fatal is thy flight ;—
What feathers grow beneath thy wing,
What darts—how poison'd—from what spring
Of sorrow, and how keen the sting,—
  How cureless still the blight.

Enough!—the cry has had its way,
As thou hast had!—'tis not the lay
Of vain complaint,—no idle play
  Of fancy-dreaming care:
A mocking bitter like thine own,
Wells up from fountains, deep and lone,
Where sorrow, by sepulchral stone,
  Sits watching thy career.
Thou'st mock'd my hope and dash'd my joy,
With keen rebuke and sad alloy—
The father, son—the man, the boy,
  All, all! have felt the rod:—
Perchance, not all thy work in vain,
In softening soul, subduing brain,
If, suffering, I submit to pain,—
  That minister of God.

THE TRAVELLER'S REST.

For hours we wander'd o'er the beaten track,
A dreary stretch of sand, that, in the blaze
Of noonday, seem'd to launch sharp arrows back,
As fiery as the sun's. Our weary steeds
Falter'd, with drooping heads, along the plain,
Looking from side to side most wistfully,
For shade and water. We could feel for them,
Having like thirst; and, in a desperate mood,
Gloomy with toil, and parching with the heat,
I had thrown down my burden by the way,
And slept, as man may never sleep but once,

Yielding without a sigh,—so utterly
Had the strong will, beneath the oppressive care,
Fail'd of the needed energy for life,—
When, with a smile, the traveller by my side,
A veteran of the forest and true friend,
Whose memory I recall with many a tear,
Laid his rough hand most gently on mine own,
And said, in accents still encouraging :—

"Faint not,—a little farther we shall rest,
And find sufficient succor from repose,
For other travel: vigor will come back,
And sweet forgetfulness of all annoy,
With a siesta in the noontide hour,
Shelter'd by ample oaks. A little while
Will bring us to the sweetest spot in the woods,
Named aptly, 'Traveller's Rest.' There, we shall drink
Of the pure fountain, and beneath the shade
Of trees, that murmur lessons of content
To streams impatient as they glide from sight,
Forget the long day's weariness, o'er steppes
Of burning sand, with thirst that looks in vain
For the cool brooklet. All these paths I know
From frequent travail, when my pulse, like yours,
Beat with an ardor soon discomfited,
Unseason'd by endurance. Through a course
Of toil, I now can think upon with smiles,
Which brought but terror when I felt it first,
I grew profound in knowledge of the route,
Marking each wayside rock, each hill of clay,
Blazed shaft, or blighted thick, and forked tree,
With confidence familiar as you found
In bookish lore and company. Cheer up,

Our pathway soon grows pleasant. We shall reach—
Note well how truly were my lessons conn'd,—
A little swell of earth, which, on these plains,
Looks proudly like a hill. This having pass'd,
The land sinks suddenly—the groves grow thick,
And, in the embrace of May, the giant wood
Puts on new glories. Shade from these will soothe
Thy overwearied spirit, and anon,
The broad blaze on the trunk of a dark pine
That strides out on the highway to our right,
Will guide us where, in woodland hollow, keeps
One lonely fountain; such as those of yore,
The ancient poets fabled as the home,
Each of its nymph; a nymph of chastity,
Whose duty yet is love. A thousand times,
When I was near exhausted as yourself,
That gash upon the pine-tree strengthen'd me,
As showing where the waters might be found,
Otherwise voiceless. Thanks to the rude man—
Rude in the manners of his forest life,
But frank and generous,—whose benevolent heart—
Good kernel in rough outside,—counsels him,
As in the ages of the Patriarch,
To make provision for the stranger's need.
His axe, whose keen edge blazons on the tree
Our pathway to the waters that refresh,
Was in that office consecrate, and made
Holier than knife, in hands of bearded priest,
That smote, in elder days, the innocent lamb,
In sacrifice to Heaven!

"Now, as we glide,
The forest deepens round us. The bald tracts,
Sterile, or glittering but with profitless sands,

Depart; and through the glimmering woods behold
A darker soil, that on its bosom bears
A nobler harvest. Venerable oaks,
Whose rings are the successive records, scored
By Time, of his dim centuries; pines that lift,
And wave their coronets of green aloft,
Highest to heaven of all the aspiring wood;
And cedars, that with slower worship rise—
Less proudly, but with better grace, and stand
More surely in their meekness;—how they crowd,
As if 'twere at our coming, on the path!—
Not more majestic, not more beautiful,
The sacred shafts of Lebanon, though sung
By Princes, to the music of high harps,
Midway from heaven;—for these, as they, attest
His countenance who, to glory over all,
Adds grace in the highest, and above these groves
Hung brooding, when, beneath the creative word,
They freshen'd into green, and towering grew,
Memorials of his presence as his power!
—Alas! the forward vision! a few years
Will see these shafts o'erthrown. The profligate hands
Of avarice and of ignorance will despoil
The woods of their old glories; and the earth,
Uncherish'd, will grow barren, even as the fields,
Vast still, and beautiful once, and rich as these,
Which, in my own loved home, half desolate,
Attest the locust rule,—the waste, the shame,
The barbarous cultivation—which still robs
The earth of its warm garment and denies
Fit succor, which might recompense the soil,
Whose inexhaustible bounty, fitly kept,
Was meant to fill the granaries of man,
Through all earth's countless ages.

" How the sward
Thickens in matted green. Each tufted cone
Gleams with its own blue jewel, dropt with white,
Whose delicate hues and tints significant,
Wake tenderness within the virgin's heart,
In love's own season. In each mystic cup
She reads sweet meaning, which commends the flower
Close to her tremulous breast. Nor seems it there
Less lovely than upon its natural couch,
Of emerald bright,—and still its hues denote
Love's generous spring-time, which, like generous youth,
Clouds never the dear aspect of its green,
With sickly doubts of what the autumn brings."

Boy as I was, and speaking still through books—
Not speaking from myself—I said : " Alas !
For this love's spring-time—quite unlike the woods,
It never knows but one ; and, following close,
The long, long years of autumn, with her robes
Of yellow mourning, and her faded wreath
Of blighted flowers, that, taken from her heart,
She flings upon the grave-heap where it rots !"

" Ah ! fie !" was straightway the reply of him,
The old benevolent master, who had seen,
Through thousand media yet withheld from me,
The life I had but dream'd of—" this is false !—
Love hath its thousand spring-times like the flowers,
If we are dutiful to our own hearts,
And nurse the truths of life, and not its dreams.
But not in hours like this, with such a show
Around us, of earth's treasures, to despond,
To sink in weariness and to brood on death.
Oh ! be no churl, in presence of the Queen

Of this most beautiful country, to withhold
Thy joy,—when all her court caparison'd,
Comes to her coronation in such suits
Of holiday glitter. It were sure a sin
In sight of Heaven, when now the humblest shrub
By the maternal bounty is set forth,
As for a bridal, with a jewell'd pomp
Of flowers in blue enamel—lustrous hues
Brightening upon their bosoms like sweet tints,
Caught from dissolving rainbows, as the sun
Rends with his ruddy shafts their violet robes,—
When gay vines stretching o'er the streamlet's breast
Link the opposing pines and arch the space,
Between, with a bright canopy of charms,
Whose very least attraction wears a look
Of life and fragrance!—when the pathway gleams,
As spread for march of Princess of the East,
With gems of living lustre—ravishing hues
Of purple, as if blood-dipp'd in the wounds
Of Hyacinthus,—him Apollo loved,
And slew though loving:—now, when over all
The viewless nymphs that tend upon the streams,
And watch the upward growth of April flowers,
Wave ever, with a hand that knows not stint,
Yet suffers no rebuke for profligate waste,
Their aromatic censers, 'till we breathe
With difficult delight;—not now to gloom
With feeble cares and individual doubts,
Of cloud to-morrow. It were churlish here,
Ungracious in the sovereign Beauty's sight,
Who rules this realm, the dove-eyed sovran, Spring!
This hour to sympathy—to free release
From toil, and sorrow, and doubt, and all the fears
That hang about the horizon of the heart,

Making it feel its sad mortality,
Even when most sweet its joy—she hath decreed:
Let us obey her, though no citizens.

"How grateful grows the shade—mix'd shade of trees,
And clouds, that drifting o'er the sun's red path,
Curtain his awful brows! Ascend yon hill,
And we behold the valley from whose breast
Flows the sweet brooklet. Yon emblazon'd pine
Marks the abrupt transition to the shade,
Where, welling from the bankside, it steals forth,
A voice without a form. Through grassy slopes,
It wanders on unseen, and seems no more
Than their own glitter; yet, behold it now,
Where, jetting through its green spout, it bounds forth,
Capricious, as if doubtful where to flow,—
A pale white streak—a glimmering, as it were,
Cast by some trembling moonbow through the woods!

"Here let us rest. A shade like that of towers,
Wrought by the Moor in matchless arabesque,
Makes the fantastic ceiling,—leaves and stems,
Half-form'd, yet flowery tendrils, that shoot out,
Each wearing its own jewel,—that above
O'erhangs; sustain'd by giants of the wood,
Erect and high, like warriors gray with years,
Who lift their massive shields of holiest green,
On fearless arms, that still defy the sun,
And foil his arrows. At our feet they fall,
Harmless and few, and of the fresh turf make
A rich mosaic. Tremblingly, they creep,
Half-hidden only, to the blushing shoots
Of pinks, that never were abroad before,
And shrink from such warm instance. Here are flowers,

Pied, blue, and white, with creepers that uplift
Their green heads, and survey the world around—
As modest merit, still ambitionless—
Only to crouch again; yet each sustains
Some treasure, which, were earth less profligate,
Or rich, were never in such keeping left.
And here are daisies, violets that peep forth
When winds of March are blowing, and escape
Their censure in their fondness. Thousands more,—
Look where they spread around us—at our feet—
Nursed on the mossy trunks of massive trees,
Themselves that bear no flowers—and by the stream—
Too humble and too numerous to have names!

"There is no sweeter spot along the path,
In all these western forests,—sweet for shade,
Or beauty, or reflection—sights and sounds—
All that can charm the wanderer, or o'ercome
His cares of travel. Here we may repose,
Subdued by gentlest murmurs of the noon,
Nor feel its heat, nor note the flight of hours,
That never linger here. How sweetly falls
The purring prattle of the stream above,
Where, roused by petty strife with vines and flowers,
It wakes with childish anger, nor forbears
Complaint, even when, beguiled by dear embrace,
It sinks to slumber in its bed below!
The red-bird's song now greets us from yon grove,
Where, starring all around with countless flowers,
Thick as the heavenly host, the dogwood glows,
Array'd in virgin white. There, mid the frowns
Of sombrous oaks, and where the cedar's glooms
Tell of life's evening shades, unchidden shines
The maple's silver bough, that seems to flash

A sudden moonlight; while its wounded arms,
Stream with their own pure crimson, strangely bou
With yellow wreaths, flung o'er its summer hurts,
By the lascivious jessamine, that, in turn,
Capricious, creeps to the embrace of all.

"The eye unpain'd with splendor—with unrest
That mocks the free rapidity of wings,
Just taught to know their uses and go forth,
Seeking range but no employment—hath no quest
That Beauty leaves unsatisfied. The lull
Of drowsing sounds, from leaf, and stream, and tree
Persuades each sense, and to forgetfulness
Beguiles the impetuous thought. Upon the air
Sweetness hangs heavy, like the incense cloud
O'er the high altar, when cathedral rites
Are holiest, and our breathing for a while
Grows half suspended. Sullen, in the sky,
With legions thick, and banners broad unfurl'd,
The summer tempest broods. Below him wheels,
Like some fierce trooper of the charging host,
One fearless vulture. Earth beside us sleeps,
Having no terror; though an hour may bring
A thousand fiery bolts to break her rest.

"How natural is the face of woods and vales,
Trees, and the unfailing waters, spite of years,
Time's changes, and the havoc made by storm!
The change is all in man. Year after year,
I look for the old landmarks on my route,
And seldom look in vain. A darker moss
Coats the rough outside of the old gray rock;—
Some broad arm of the oak is wrench'd away,
By storm and thunder—through the hill-side wears

A deeper furrow,—and the streams descend,
Sometimes, in wilder torrents than before—
But still they serve as guides o'er ancient paths,
For wearied wanderers. Still do they arise,
In groups of grandeur, an old family,
These great magnificent trees, that, as I look,
Fill me with loftiest thoughts, such as one feels
Beholding the broad wing of some strong bird,
Poised on its centre, motionless in air,
Yet sworn its master still. Not in our life,
Whose limit, still inferior, mocks our pride,
Reach they this glorious stature. At their feet,
Our young, grown aged like ourselves, may find
Their final couches, ere one vigorous shaft
Yields to the stroke of time. Beneath mine eyes,
All that makes beautiful this place of peace,
Wears the peculiar countenance which first
Won my delight and wonder as I came—
Then scarcely free from boyhood,—wild as he,
The savage Muscoghee, who, in that day,
Was master of these plains. His hunting range
Grasp'd the great mountains of the Cherokee,
The Apalachian ridge—extended west
By Talladega's valleys—by the streams
Of Tallas-hatchie—through the silent woods
Of gray Emuckfau, and where, deep in shades,
Rise the clear brooks of Autossee that flow
To Tallapoosa;—names of infamy
In Indian chronicle! 'Twas here they fell,
The numerous youth of Muscoghee,—the strong—
Patriarchs of many a tribe—dark seers renown'd,
As deeply read in savage mystery—
The Prophet Monohōee—priest as famed,
Among his tribe, as any that divined

In Askelon or Ashdod;—stricken to the earth,
Body and spirit, in repeated strife,
With him, that iron-soul'd old chief, who came
Plunging from Tennessee.

"Below they stretch'd,
In sovran mastery o'er the wood and stream,
'Till the last waves of Choctawhatchie slept,
Subsiding, in the gulf. Such was the realm
They traversed, in that season of my youth,
When first beside this pleasant stream I sank,
In noontide slumber. What is now their realm,
And where are now their warriors? Streams that once
Soothed their exhaustion, satisfied their thirst—
Woods that gave shelter—plains o'er which they sped
In mimic battle—battle-fields whereon
Their bravest chieftains perish'd—trees that bore
The fruits they loved but rear'd not;—these remain,
But yield no answer for the numerous race,—
Gone with the summer breezes—with the leaves
Of perish'd autumn;—with the cloud that frowns
This moment in the heavens, and, ere the night,
Borne forward in the grasp of chainless winds,
Is speeding on to ocean.

"Wandering still—
That sterile and most melancholy life,—
They skirt the turbid streams of Arkansas,
And hunt the buffalo to the rocky steeps
Of Saladanha; and, on lonely nooks,
Ridge-barrens, build their little huts of clay,
As frail as their own fortunes. Dreams, perchance,
Restore the land they never more shall see;
Or, in meet recompense, bestow them tracts

More lovely—vast, unmeasured tracts, that lie
Beyond those peaks, that, in the northern heavens,
Rise blue and perilous now. There, rich reserves
Console them in the future for the past;
And, with a Christian trust, the Pagan dreams
His powerful gods will recompense his faith,
By pleasures, in degree as exquisite
As the stern suffering he hath well endured.
His forest fancy, not untaught to soar,
Already, in his vision of midnight, sees
The fertile valleys; on his sight arise
Herds of the shadowy deer; and, from the copse,
Slow stealing, he beholds, with eager gaze,
The spirit-hunter gliding toward his prey,
In whose lithe form, and practised art, he views
Himself!—a noble image of his youth
That never more shall fail!

"We may not share
His rapture; for if thus the might of change
Mocks the great nation, sweeps them from the soil
Which bore, but could not keep—what is't with us,
Who muse upon their fate? Darkly, erewhile,
Thou spok'st of death and change, and I rebuked
The mood that scorn'd the present good—still fond
To brood above the past. Yet, in my heart,
Grave feelings rise to chide the undesert,
That knew not well to use the power I held,
In craving that to come. Have these short years
Wrought thus disastrously upon *my* strength,
As on the savage? What have I done to build
My better home of refuge; where the heart,
By virtue taught, by conscience made secure,
May safely find an altar, 'neath whose base

The tempest rocks in vain? The red-man's fate
Belong'd to his performance. They who know
How to destroy alone, and not to raise,
Leaving a ruin for a monument,
Must perish as the brute. But I was taught
The nobler lesson, that, for man alone,
The maker gives the example of his power,
That he may build on him. What work of life—
The moral monument of the Christian's toil—
Stands, to maintain my memory after death,
Amongst the following footsteps? Sadly, the ear
Receives his question, who, with sadder speech,
Makes his own answer. Unperforming still,
He yet hath felt the mighty change that moves,
Progressive, as the march of mournful hours,
Still hurrying to the tomb. 'Tis on his cheek,
No more the cheek of boyhood—in his eye,
That laughs not with its wonted merriment,
And in his secret heart. 'Tis over all
He sees and feels—o'er all that he hath loved,
And fain would love, and must remember still!
Those gray usurpers, Death and Change, have been
Familiar in his household, and he stands,
Of all that grew around his innocent hearth,
Alone—the last! And this hath made him now
An exile,—better pleased with woods and streams,
Wild ocean, and the rocks that vex his waves,
Than, sitting in the city's porch, to hear
The hurry, and the thoughtless hum of trade!

"The charm is broken and the 'Traveller's Rest!'
The sun no longer beats with noonday heat
Above the pathway, and the evening bird,
Short wheeling through the air, on whirring wing,

Counsels our flight with his. Another draught—
And to these pleasant waters—to the groves
That shelter'd—to the gentle breeze that soothed,
Even as a breath from heaven—to all sweet sights,
Melodious sounds and murmurs, that arise
To cheer the sadden'd spirit at its need—
Be thanks and blessing; gratitude o'er all,
To God in the Highest! He it is who guides
The unerring footstep—prompts the wayward heart
To kindly office—shelters from the sun—
Withholds the storm,—and, with his leaves and flowers,
Sweet freshening streams and ministry of birds,
Sustains, and succors, and invigorates;—
To Him, the praise and homage—Him o'er all!"

THE MOCK-BIRD.

What has winter left for thee,
That, within the ancient tree,
Thou dost linger, in thy gray,
Sober vestments, like some friar,
Haunting still the old abbaye,
Wasted by the strife and fire?
Wherefore house thee thus alone,
When the other tribes have gone?—
With them to the forest speed:
Leave to human heart the grief,
That in woe and dusky weed,
When winter twilight's cold and brief,
Walks sad with hooded Thought, through perish'd wood and leaf.

Sure I know thee!—thou art he,
That, with reckless minstrelsy,
Lately sung—while all the grove,
By the spring-buds won to joy,
Bathed in fragrance, breathed of love—
Ditty of a wild annoy;
Mocking all with scornful strain,
Till the passion grew to pain,
And each humbler warbler fled,
Silent, in his shame and fear,
Thou the while, with wing outspread,
Sweetly voiced in spite of sneer,
Throned on the topmost bough, or darting wild through air.

Thou hast pleasures. I have seen,
When the buxom spring was green,
How thy nest was tended—how
Thou didst gather straw and blade,
And, within the ancient bough,
Sit, the stem and leaf to braid.—
Patient was thy watch, and stern
Lesson might the serpent learn,—
Crawling where thy young ones lie,
With his cruel, keen desire,—
From thy eagle-raging eye,
Showing all thy soul on fire,
While talon, beak and wing declared the warrior's ire.

Patient, as thy young ones grow,
Use of feeble wings to show,
How, to glide from bough to bough,
How with gradual flight, to bear,
Poised on spreading pinion now,
Through the yielding heart of air;

And, when free of wing, and high,
Winging, singing, through the sky,—
Then, with thy triumphant strain,
Matchless in unmeasured might,
As if born of madden'd brain,
Ecstasied with deep delight,
Whirling in voice aloft, in far, capricious flight.

Why the cynic temper?—why
Still that strain of mockery?
Art thou truer? Dost thou sneer,
As thou haply know'st that none
Of the love songs spring must hear,
Speaks fidelity but one?
Thou art constant—that I know—
To thy young ones,—to the foe,—
To thy mate, and to the tree,
That beside my window-sill,
Many a year, has been to thee
Cottage-home and empire still,—
Thou wast the sovereign there, and ever hadst thy will.

Still maintain it—thou alone,
Of the birds, when summer's gone,
Keep'st thy dwelling, hold'st thy place,
As if in thy breast there grew
Something, which, to human race,
Kept thee dedicate and true.
Cynical thy song, but mine
Might be cynical like thine,
Could I deem with thee, that all
Of the vows in spring we hear,
Were forgotten by the fall;—
But I shrink from doubt so drear;—
I yield my heart to faith, and love when thou wouldst sneer.

AUTUMN TWILIGHT.

There is a soft haze hanging on yon hill,
Tinged with a purple light. How beautiful,
And yet, how cold! 'Tis the first robe put on,
With gloomy foretaste of a gloomier hour,
By the sad Autumn. Well may she repine,—
With heavy dread of winter at her heart,
Adverse to present sweetness as to hope,
Which never cheers her fortunes. She is doom'd—
Survivor of a race that left no heirs,
And she, the mourner of the beautiful,
Whose treasure, in the past to which she glides,
Was but a bright decay, a perishing bloom,
The bounty of a love whose dearest gifts
Best show in desolation. The sweet green,
The summer flush of love—the golden bloom
That came with flowers in April, and brought sweets
Whose purity might teach a faith that life
Were also in their breathing—all are gone!
The green grows pallid—the warm, virgin flush,
That was in summer's eye, and on her cheek,
A glory all too precious for a dream,—
Too precious far for mortal certainty—
Fleets all—as keen, the breezes from the hills
Sweep icily o'er the meadows. All the bright hues,
That graced the flowers and hemispheric crowns
Of trees grown haughty in a birthday dress,
Seem vanishing with the sunset. The last rays
That drink their purple brightness with their lives,
Fade upwards through the forest—a sad flush,
That lothly leaves the twilight, and a while
Lingers upon the hill-tops, as surveying

The empires that it forfeits. Now the winds,
Slow rising as from caverns of the night,
With trailing robes of darkness, and broad arms,
Stretched out, in action suited to the dirge
That speaks the mournful ruin of their homes,
Wail heavily through the branches; while the leaves,
Saddest of mourners! flung on summer's grave,
Lament her in the silence of true grief!
Ah! mock me not that thus I mourn with them;
The sad heart's wisdom is to weep enough!—
I hear your lesson, but of what avail?
Since, while it teaches worthlessness of grief,
It still acknowledges the pregnant cause
That, in the very uselessness of tears,
Compels our tears most freely. You discourse,
To feeling, with a counsel that prevents
All feeling; and unless you stifle her,
You teach most idly. Never yet was grief
Fit moralist,—and that philosophy,
Which will not take its color from the heart
It seeks to fortify against the cloud,
Reaches no sacred chord of sympathy,
Responsive with sweet echoes. All your laws
Teach sorrow when you teach her hopelessness.
To bid the sacred current cease to flow,
'Tis needful first you freeze it; and what gain,
To him with dear affections, o'er whose grave,
He still encourages dear memories,
That feeling should be made secure from hurt,
By gross and cold insensibility?
Foregoing nature, what do we acquire
But forfeiture? As well persuade the flower
To grow to stone, lest, rifled by the storm,
Its premature bloom shall perish. If unwise

To yield to sorrow the sole sovereignty,
As little wise to substitute for this,
The apathy, that, still rejecting grief,
Grows ignorant of all rapture. You declaim—
With the grave studied eloquence of books,
Writ by cold monks in the ascetic cell,
That life is full of changes.—Be it so!
These changes ever are from joy to woe,
And woe to joy again. To conquer one
Is scarce to know the other. In your calm,
'Tis easy to declare that things of life,
By the inevitable laws of things,
Are also things of death; but not the less
Find we a sacred certainty of grief,
Even in this very knowledge. Death, you say,
Still harvests forms that love, not less than forms
That simply live; and folly 'tis to mourn,
That the dear life whose presence was a joy
And fragrance, that forever brought us joy,
Is destined to as sure an apathy
As the poor flowers we tread on.
Happy he,
Perchance—and yet I think not—who can thus
Prose calmly over nature, and the fate
Of her dear offspring in whatever fields.
But mine is not this happiness;—nor mine,
The thought that happiness may light her fire,
From such dry chips of doctrine. The rich sap,
May from the wounded tree gush forth in tears,
The green rind feel its hurts, and something lose
Of verdure in the injury which it feels.
But teach the bough, how better were it lopt,
And flung into the fire, than suffering thus,
From the keen hurts of the too wanton axe

The wound will heal. You point me to the scars;
But while it still hath rind for newer hurts,
And fresh sap still to flow from other wounds,
The scars are but in proof of strength to bear,
As well as hurts to suffer. Tears, for me,
Bring sweet relief for what is lost or borne,
As teaching still of sensibilities
For future feeling; whether joy or woe,
Or gain or loss;—and, in this consciousness,
One finds a better solace for the past,
Than in that cold philosophy which stills
The too susceptible pulse, lest it should throb,
Some day, with fever. Yet, that fever throb,
Itself, declares the warm vitality
Still looking forth with hope.
And still you chide,
That grief should waste upon inferior things,
Leaves of the forest, flowers of the summer day,
Fruits of a season's tribute, and frail fancies
Born of the dew and sunshine, for the hour,
The sorrows that might find excuse, if given
For loss of human treasure—forms and greatness,
Which fill society with sense of virtue,
And still commend to love that fierce ambition
That makes even love a sacrifice in turn!
Alas! we know not what is worthy, what is great,
And weep from fancy, rather than from law;
And fancy is a law, and in our feelings
Hath charter'd rights, and shapes them at her pleasure,
To make us weep, if need be; tears and sorrows
Being as much her proper properties,
As sunshine and gay laughter, sport and flight.
Yet have I something of a plea beyond,
In the condition which has shut me out

From much, that, in the common social life,
Commends itself unto humanity,
As only worth its care. Mine was a lot
Peculiar in its loneliness of aim,
If not distinction. Childhood found me first
A sad bewilder'd orphan—one who stood
Alone among his fellows,—and when wrong'd,
Knew not the lap in which to hide his head,
Nor friendly ear in which to pour complaint.
I had no parent's tendance. Never mine
A sister's lips have hallow'd while they press'd;—
No brother call'd me his;—no natural ties
Embraced, and train'd, and cherish'd my wild youth,
Which still went erring into devious ways,
Sorrowing as much as sinning, in a mood
That craved love only for its guide to goodness;—
And this alone it found not—or in vain!—
And thus, with strong affections, still in exile,
Denied where they sought favor, I have turn'd
To the inanimate, unspeaking creatures,
That grew about or wanton'd in my path—
Having no scorn or hatred in their hearts—
Having no voice of censure on their tongues—
For that most needed sympathy of nature,
Which answer'd best the hunger in my heart.
Thus were my footsteps won into the forest,
Thus did I seek these groves as if in worship,
With regular tendance, and a meek observance,
That suffer'd not the chant of winds, the sighing,
That seem'd most human, in the pine's great branches,—
The fall of leaf, the shadows of the thicket,
Or flutter of the gay bird o'er the pathway,—
To 'scape me;—moralizing at each motion,
Something, that as it soothed the troubled feeling,

Was surely not philosophy. My rambles
Still brought me what I sought;—and these pale flowers,
And the green leaves, now yellow, at our feet,
Were something more to me than leaves and flowers.
They were my kindred. Now, that they are gone,
I weep them as a loss of family,
And tread among them with a cautious step,
A sad, slow motion, and with trembling heart,
As I were reading, in some ancient church-yard,
The names of dear ones precious to my childhood.

BALLAD.

Oh! bury him quickly, and utter no word
Of the memory sadden'd by sorrow so long;
But when the cold stranger shall say that he err'd,
Then tell the dark tale of his crueller wrong.
We may not approve, but when others condemn,
'Twere crime that defence of his heart to forbear,
And show that his faults were all prompted by them,—
They could goad him to danger, then fly from him there.

You saw him for many long days ere he fell,
In chains and in solitude, sad but serene;
'Tis grateful to know that he battled it well,
While his spirit grew strong in the gloom of the scene.
They thought him all callous to feeling and shame,—
Ah! little they knew him;—the spirit he bore
Once aim'd at, and sigh'd for, as lofty a fame
As shines on the pages of history's lore.

But pile the dank sod which no stone shall adorn,
No hand ever freshen with shrub or with flower;
We bury him coldly—we leave him forlorn—
And midnight was never more dark than this hour.
It is but a year since all proudly he stood,
Brave, bright, unassuming—the sought, the preferr'd—
Upheld by the strong, and beloved by the good—
Now—bury him quickly, and utter no word!

HAST THOU A SONG FOR A FLOWER.

I.

Hast thou a song for a flower,
Such as, if breathed in its ear,
Would waken in beauty's own bower
The spirit most fit to be there?
Then, minstrel, I challenge thy power—
Such song, if thou hast, sing it here!—
Here, where the breeze o'erwearied,
With his travel o'er ocean creeps,
And on the green leaf by her lattice,
Sinks languidly down and sleeps.

II.

For her the sweet music thou bringest
Must in a true spirit be wrought,
And the passion of mine thou singest
Must be pure as the child's first thought.
If none such within thee springest,
Away, for thy presence is naught.

Far better the breeze, at waking,
Should tell her that hopeless I come,
With itself, to the leaf at her lattice,
And laid me down, dreaming but dumb.

ENIGMA.

I AM most potent of all earthly powers,
Save one. I penetrate the loftiest towers,
As freely as the cottage, in all hours;
I paralyze the strongest with a spell;
Soothe the most suffering; shut the fatal knell
From out the ears of misery; beguile
The saddest mourner to a hopeful smile;
Bring cheerful guests into the solitude,
That minister unto the sufferer's mood,
So that he straight forgets what gave him pain,
And wins the strength and hope of youth again.
No will can combat mine, no might withstand;
And man before me bows throughout the land,
As at a tyrant's progress; yet with joy,
For that I sway to succor, not destroy.
Yet, do I arm myself with terrors still,
When they are needful. I can bring the thrill,
Of fear or horror, to the guilty soul,
And make him hear the far-off thunders roll,
As at his feet; can swift around him group,
Even at a whisper, a most terrible troop
Of his assailing enemies. My spell,
Most strong when softest, is invincible.
You strive with me in vain. I stretch a wing,

Unseen above you. In your ears I sing,
In most unnoted accents. Round your neck
I weave such subtle chains as never break,
Save with my satisfied purpose. Your white breast,
You do unfold me, whether as a guest,
Obtrusive, or implored and much caress'd.
You may not shut from me your secret thought,
Your passion or your guilt. Unask'd, unsought,
You whisper to me your best hope and fear,
What you endure of grief, what joys endear,
And whom you love and hate. And I, who hear.
Still keep your secret;—to your service bound,
Still faithful, still unbidden, I am found,
Whene'er the season calls me, or the place;
An angel you may hold me, or a grace;
Devoted as the first, and as the last,
Still blessing—though the sights I bring may blast!
My bond of service never shall be broke,
Till I no more may spell, or thou invoke,
Then, when perforce I leave thee, I resign
Thy charge to one, a kinswoman of mine,
Of greater powers, but hostile still to thine.

SONNET.

SYMPATHY BETWEEN THE PAST AND FUTURE.

Would we go forward boldly, and gain heart
For farther progress, we must pause a while,
And gaze upon the path, for many a mile,
We follow'd when we first grew bold to start;—
That so much has been traversed, is a goad

To fresh endeavor; and the eye grows bright,
With expectation, as the baffled sight
Would vainly compass all the o'er-trodden road;—
The pathways of the future will grow clear,
When the first fresh beginnings of the march
Lie bright beneath the broad and sheltering arch;
And, repossess'd of childhood, we are near
Heaven's sources,—for the true humanity
Keeps past and future still in either eye.

TO THE BREEZE.

AFTER A PROTRACTED CALM IN THE GULF OF MEXICO.

I.

Thou com'st at last! Our sorrow is at end;
Thou com'st, and hast our blessing, pleasant breeze.
Yet where hast thou been wandering, fickle friend?
Where, when the midnight gather'd to her brow
Her pale and silent minister, wast thou?
On what far, sullen, solitary seas,
Piping the mariner's requiem, didst thou tend
The home-returning bark,
Curling the white foam o'er her plunging prow,—
White, when the rolling waves about her all were dark?

II.

Ah! thou didst woo her sweetly as she lay,
Still idly rocking on the unconscious deep;
Thou sought'st her with a breath
Of spicy odor from Sonora's vales;

And, with the sweetest of imploring gales,
That seem'd like life to death,
Filling her yellow sails,
Beguiled her on her way.
With sudden voice, like that of mountain bird
Singing, thou wok'st her from her dreary sleep,
Until her every pulse of life grew stirr'd:
Her fluttering pennant was the first to fly,
Then the great vans swell'd out delightedly,
And, with the song of land he loves to hear,
Thou bad'st the mariner cheer!

III.

Oh! well thou know'st the mission that is thine,
And, when in sluggish bonds old ocean slept,
Making of life no sign,—
While the faint moaning o'er his breast that crept
Seem'd like the breathings of eternity
Above the grave of the unburied Time,—
Then didst thou clothe thyself in wings of prime,
Then speed thy work of mercy.—How the tar,
His form reclined along the burning deck,
Stretch'd ever more his eager eye afar,
Still watching for thy coming—for the speck,
Marking thy shadow, from some giant steep,
Down darting to the embraces of the deep!

IV.

Late, but not faithless to thy charge, thy flight
Soon came to bless his sight.
So long a fond and watching worshipper,
He knew to hail thy coming, nor to err,
No matter what thy shape, or whence thy wing.

Thou wert his passion. By the dearest names
He did implore thy presence: "My sweet breeze,
Whither! oh whither!"—I have heard him sing
Rudely, but with a strength that feeling tames
To fondness in rough natures—"My delight!
Where art thou—where, oh! beauty of the seas,—
My breeze, my pleasant breeze!"

v.

Were all the charms by mortal passion sung
As worthy of the tongue!
Ah! breath of life to nature, thou art sure
The image of that ever young and pure,
Superior spirit, which, when all was dim,
Ere yet creation sang her choral hymn,
And darkness brooded o'er the stagnant deep,
Moved on the waters, waking them from sleep,
And rousing them to purposes of Him
For whom all wings have flight!
Born in the solemn night,
Ere skies had birth in bright,
With uncreated watchers for the sight,—
Thine was the music, through the firmament
By the fond nature sent,
To hail the happy birth,
And guide to sea and earth
The glorious wing, the blessing eye of light!

vi.

Music to us no less,
Thou com'st in our distress,
To ope the pathway, all made clear by thee,
Through the wide waste of sea!

Soothing, thou bring'st to him who goes alone
Unwatch'd and unremember'd o'er the wave,
Perchance his grave!
Should he there perish, to thy simple moan
What hope to add, from human tenderness,
One fond imploring tone!

VII.

I bless thee, gentle breeze!
Sweet minister to many a fond desire,
Thou bear'st me to my sire,
Thou, and these rolling seas!
What, O dear God of this great element,
Are we before thee, that its breath is sent,
Obedient to young love and eager hope?
But that its pinion with our path is blent,
We had been doom'd, blind, weak, and dark, to grope,
Where plummet's cast is vain, and human art
Lacking all chart!

LYRICAL BALLAD.

If the fruit of the tree was delicious,
Yet how keen was the bitter it brought;
As the zephyr, though sweet, is capricious,
With blight as with luxury fraught:
Who roves in a garden, ungrateful
For the tendance that nourish'd its bloom?
Better fly to the wilderness hateful,
Where nothing is false but the gloom!

We are still the vain creatures of vision,
Where the eyes only torture the soul;
Our worship still meets with derision,
And we gain, but by flying the goal.
He dreams not, the victim, self-banish'd
From the shrine which has mock'd at his prayer,
That 'tis only when pleasure has vanish'd
He safely may harbor with Care!

The doubt that still hangs o'er the dreaming,
Spoils the rapture that follows its show;
As the flash of the lightning, whose gleaming
Reveals the deep blackness below:
The spirit of Love, thus, in flying,
Still glooms the sad Being it woos,
And finds its best solace in sighing,
With a doubt of the heart it subdues!

THE NEW MOON.

"Bend thy bow, Dian! shoot thy silver shaft
Through the dark bosom of yon murky cloud,
That, like a shroud,
Hangs heavy o'er the dwelling of sweet night!"

And the sky laugh'd,
Even as I spake the words; and, in the west,
The columns of her mansion shone out bright!
A glory hung above Eve's visible brow,
The maiden empress!—and she glided forth
In beauty, looking down on the tranced earth,

So fondly, that its rivulets below
Gush'd out to hail her, as if then first blest
With the soft motion of their voiceless birth.
A sudden burst of brightness o'er me broke—
The rugged crags of the dull cloud were cleft
By her sharp arrow, and the edges left,—
How sweetly wounded !—silver'd with the stroke;
Thus making a fit pathway for her march
Through the blue arch !

FOREST REVERIE BY STARLIGHT.

The night has settled down. A dewy hush
Hangs o'er the forest, save when fitful gusts
Vex the tall pines with murmurs. Spring is here,
With breath all incense, and with cheek all bloom,
And voice of many minstrels. Balmy airs
Creep gently to my bosom, and beguile
Each feeling into freshness. I will forth,
And gaze upon the stars—the uncounted stars—
Holding high watch in heaven—still high, still bright,
Though the storm gathers round the sacred hill,
And shakes the cottage roof-tree. There they shine,
In well-remember'd youth. They bear me back,
With strange persuasiveness, to the old time
And happy hours of boyhood. There's no change
In all their virgin glory. Clouds that roll,
And congregate in the azure deeps of heaven,
In wild debate and darkness, pass away,
Leaving them bright in the same beauty still,
Defying, in the progress of the years,

All change; and rising ever from the night,
In soft and dewy splendor as at first,
When, golden footprints of the Eternal steps,
They paved the walks of heaven, and grew to eyes
Beckoning the feet of man. Ah! would his eyes
Behold them, with meet yearning to pursue
The holy heights they counsel! Would his soul
Claim kindred with the happy forms that now
Walk by their blessed guidance—walk in heaven,
In paths of the Good Shepherd! Then were earth
Deserving of their beauty: then were man,
Already following, step by step, their points
To the One Presence—at each onward step
Leaving new lights that cheer his brother on,
In a like progress. Happily they shine,
As in his hours of music and of youth,
When every breath of the fresh-coming breeze,
And every darting vision of the cloud,
Gleam of the day and glimmer of the night,
Brought to the craving spirit harmony,
And bless'd each fond assurance of the hope
With sweetest confirmation. Still they shine,
And dear the story of their early prime—
And his—the conscious worshipper may read
In their enduring presence. Happiest tales
Of innocence and joy, events and hours,
That never more return. These they record,
Renew and hallow, with their own pure rays,
When blight of age is on the frame—when grief
Weighs the vex'd heart to earth—when all beside,
The father, and the mother, and the friend,
Speak in decaying syllables—dread proof
Of worse decay!—and that sad chronicler,
Feeble and failing in excess of years,

Old Memory, tottering from his mossy cell,
Stops with the imperfect legend on his lips,
And drowses into dream. No change like this
Falls on their golden-eyed veracity,
Takes from the silvery truths that line their lips,
Or stales their lovely aspects. Well they know
The years they never feel; see, without dread,
The storm that rises and the bolt that falls,
The age that chills, the apathy that chokes,
The death that withers all that blooms below,
Yet smile they on as ever, sweetly bright,
Serene, in their security from all
The change that troubles man!

Yet, hill and tree
Change with the season—with the alter'd heart,
And weak and withering muscle. Ancient groves,
That shelter'd me in childhood, have given place
To gaudy gardens; and the solemn oaks,
That heard the first prayers of my youthful heart
For greatness, and a life beyond their own—
Lo! in their stead, a maiden's slender hand
Tutors green vines, and purple buds, and flowers,
As frail as her own fancies. At each step
I miss some old companion of my walks,
Memorial of the happy hours of youth,
Whose presence had brought back a thousand joys,
And images that took the shape of joys—
The loveliest masquers, and all innocent—
That vanish'd with the rest. I would recall,
But vainly, each lost presence; and the sigh
That mourns the dear memorials now no more,
Counsels desires that to the mortal eye
Commend no mortal images. The thought

Grasps vainly, right and left, whereon to hold,
And droops, as one grown hopeless of support,
That once, with native strength for every strife,
Scorn'd succor from without. The earth denies
Her bosom for repose—the shade is gone
That offer'd grateful shelter to the eye;
And the dear aspects, which had each its birth
Twinn'd with some proud affection,—they depart,
In mournful robes of shadow that disguise
Each lineament of love.

Ah! not with these,
The perishing things that suffer from decay,
Seek we the sweet memorials of our youth—
The youth that seem'd immortal—youth that bloom'd
With hues and hopes of heaven,—firing its heart
With aspirations for eternal life,
Perpetual triumphs, and the ambitious thirst
Still for new fields and empires of domain!
In tokens of the soul—that craving thirst
That earth supplies not—in the undying things,
That man can never change—that mock his fate
With never-changing sweet serenity,
Assured of a security that builds
Upon the steadfast rock, 'gainst which the storm
Beats through successive ages, but to prove
How fast its bulwarks—how eternally
Sunk in the innate principle of things,
It draws, as to the inevitable heart,
Its growth from all the rest!—to these we turn
For the memorials precious to our youth:—
That season when the Fancy is a god—
Hope a conviction—Love an instinct—Truth,
The generous friend that ever by our side,

Hath still the sweetest story for the ear,
And wins us on our way!

Ah! stars,—though taught,
That ye too, in the inevitable doom,
Must perish like the rest—grow dim and fade,
Having no eyes of beauty for the eyes
That look to ye in beauty—yet your light
Brings back all boyhood's blessings! In my heart
Stand up the old divinities anew.
I hear their well-known voices, see their eyes
Shining once more in mine, and straight forget
That I have wept their loss in many tears,
Mix'd with reproaches—bitter, sad regrets,
Self-chidings, and the memory of wrongs,
Endured, inflicted, suffer'd, and avenged!

As I behold ye now, ye bring me back
The treasures of my boyhood. All is mine
That I had once surrender'd. Scarce a scene
Of childish prank or merriment, but comes,
With all the freshness of the infant time,
Back to my recollection. The old school,
The noisy rabble, the tumultuous cries—
The green, remember'd in the wintry day,
For the encounter of the flying ball—
The marble play, the hoop, the top, the kite,
And, when the ambition prompted higher games,
The battle-array and conflict—friends and foes
Mix'd in the wild melée, with shouts of might
Triumphant o'er the clamors of retreat!

These, in their regular seasons, with their deeds,
Their incidents of happiness or pain,

In the revival of old memories,
Your lovely lights restore: nor these alone!
The chroniclers of riper years ye grow,
And loftier thoughts and fancies; when my heart
First took ye for sweet counsellors, and loved
To wander in your evening lights, and dream
Of other eyes that watch'd ye from afar,
At the same hour—and of another heart
That gush'd in yearning sympathy with mine!
And, as the years flew by—as I became
Warier, yet more devoted—fix'd and strong—
Growing in the affections and the thoughts
When growth had ceased in stature—then, when life,
Wing'd with impetuous passions, darted by—
And voices grew into a spell, that hung,
Through the dim hours of night, about the heart,
Making it tremble strangely;—when dark eyes
Were planets, having power upon the soul,
As fated, dimly, at nativity;—
And older men were monitors too dull
For passionate youth,—and all our oracles
Were still mysterious counsellors to love,
And faith, and confident trust for all who brought
The meet credential of a faith like ours,
Gushing with sweetest overflow, and fond
Of its own tears and weaknesses.—Ah! then,
How precious was your language! What dear strains
Of promise ye pour'd forth,—in sounds that made
The impatient soul leap upward into flight,
The skies stoop down and yield to every wish,
While earth, embraced by heaven, instinct with love,
And blessing, had forgot all fears of death!

The brightness of your age, in every change,
Mocks that which palsies man. Dim centuries
That saw your fresh beginnings with delight,
Are swallow'd in the ocean-flood of years,
Or crowd with ruin the gray sands of Time,
Who still, with appetite and thirst unslaked—
Active but unappeased—voracious still,
Must swallow what remains. Sweet images,
Whose memories wake our song—whose forms abide—
The heart's ideal standards of delight—
Are gone to people those dim realms of shade,
Where rules the Past—that sovereign, single-eyed,
Whose back is on the sun!

Ah! when all these—
The joys we have recorded, and the forms
Whose very names were blessings—forms of youth,
Of childhood, and the hours we know not twice,
Which won us first, and carried us away
To strange conceits of coming happiness,
But to be thought on as delusions all,
Yet such delusions as we still must love!—
When these have parted from us—when the sky
Hath lost the charm of its ethereal blue,
And the nights lose their freshness—and the trees
No longer have a welcome shade for love—
And the moon wanes into a paler bright,
And all the poetry that stirr'd the leaves,
And all the perfume that was on the flowers—
Music upon the winds—wings in the void—
The carpeted valley's wealth of green—the dew
That morning flings on the enamell'd moss—
The hill-side, the acclivity, the grove—
Sweeter that Solitude is sleeping there!—

Are gone, as the last hope of misery:—
When the last dream of a deluded life
Hath left us to awaken—not to feel
The golden morning, but the appalling night,
When sight itself is weariness, and hope
No longer rifles from the barren path
One flower of promise!—when disease is nigh,
And every bone is racking—and the thought
Is of dry, nauseous, ineffectual drugs,
Which we must painfully swallow—but in vain—
And not a hand is nigh to quench the thirst
With one poor cup of water,—or our prayer
Is answer'd with indifferent mood, that shows
The moderate service irksome—when the eye
Strains for the closing heavens, and the fair sky
Which it is losing,—and dread images,
Meetly successive, of the sable pall,
The melancholy carriage, and the clod,
Make us to shudder with a stifling fear;—
When we have bade adieu to earthly things,
Fought through that long last struggle, still the worst,
Wrestling with self,—and winning that best boon,
Of resignation to the sovereign will,
We may no longer baffle or delude,—
And offer'd up our prayer of penitence,
Doubtful of its acceptance, yet prepared,
As well as our condition will admit,
For the last change in an unhappy life!—
Oh! then methinks 'twould still rejoice mine eyes,
Would they throw wide my casement, and permit
A last fond gaze upon the placid sky,
And all the heavenly watchers which have seen
My fair beginning, and my rising youth,
And my tall manhood. Oh! dear friend that hear'st

This chant—thy office may be soon to ask,
How shall I soothe the suffering which I see?—
With what sweet service to the friend I love,
But have not power to save, prepare his couch,
And robe him for his rest? Think of this song,
And of thy own sweet thoughts and sympathies.
Give him to see the blessed skies—the Night—
Her azure garments glowing with great eyes,
That look on him with love;—and, at the hour
Which brings thee to thy parting, it will glad
Thy heart, in that sad struggle, to behold
Their sweet serene of smiles. 'Twill bear thee back,
With all the current of thy better thoughts,
To the pure practice of thy innocent years.—
Repentant, then, of errors, evil deeds,
Imaginings of darkness, thou wilt weep
Over thy recollections; and thy tears,
The purest tribute of thy contrite heart,
Will be as a sweet prayer sent up to heaven!

INSCRIPTION FOR THERMOPYLÆ.

Stranger! thou stand'st upon Thermopylæ!
The pass that led into the heart of Greece,
But gave no passage save through greater hearts:
They keep it still.—Their graves are at thy feet.

BY THE EDISTO.

River, that still go'st brightly,
Though sweeping to the sea,
And chantest daily, nightly,
Thy own dirge-melody;
Methinks thy murmur strengthens
The purpose in my soul,
And, as thy progress lengthens,
I seem to see my goal.

I seek, as thou, the ocean,
Great sea of human life,
Won by its wild commotion,
And striving with its strife:
Vainly, we fondly linger
Where green shades woo our stay;
We both obey a finger
That points us on our way.

Yet, downward as thou rovest,
How glad thy waters make
The green banks which thou lovest,
And the zephyrs where they wake!
They wake among thy willows,
And they laugh with welcome still,
As thy downward-lapsing billows
Lift their lilies with a thrill.

The blue-bird stoops to carol,
As thy glittering streams go by,
And the bay-tree and the laurel
Bend above thee with a sigh;

But the sigh is of a pleasure
That may take no wilder voice;
And the great pines share the treasure,
And, to welcome thee, rejoice.

If thus my course may gladden
While I hurry to the deep,
Sure my heart shall never sadden
When 'tis swallow'd up in sleep;
I, too, shall hear sweet voices,
That requite me as I run,
And the pleasant thought rejoices,
I shall only grieve when gone.

THE APPROACH OF SUMMER.

Now, darting through green leaves, and bringing flowers,
Fresh blooming, borrow'd from a thousand bowers
Where nature fills her lap with fruits, and gleams
The carpet of the prairies, stars and streams,—
Comes forth, all wantoning in joyous dreams,
With eye that laughs in beauty, golden hair,
Curling and floating o'er a neck as fair
As the young moon, when in the dusky vale
She lifts her virgin crescent, soft and pale,—
The flush'd and revelling Summer. At her glance
Sinks the old wizard, Winter, into trance;
No more the mighty potentate, who shook
His icy sceptre over field and brook,

But, tottering into apathy, that goes,
Soulless and sad, to polar home of snows;
The realm usurp'd made glad in his decline,
Made free to bourgeon in its flower and vine;
The steel-bound waters rescued where he lay,
And leaping, flashing, to the smiles of day,
With all their little billows out at play;—
Birds gladsome singing round the cottage tree,
And hope and heart, for once, at liberty,
Mingling in joyous anthems which make air
All musical with love, that might be prayer.

Give the heart freedom! Let the soul take wing
With the soft promise of the golden Spring;
From book and study, forth;—uplift the eye
To the blue beauties in the morning sky;
Forget that Toil hath had his task decreed,
The daily labor, for the daily need;
Give Hope new charm in respite from its chain,
Thought fresher impulse in unlaboring brain;
No duty rules that Drudgery shall not find
Some moments grateful to the unfetter'd mind:
The heart's sweet Sabbath must not be denied,
Now, when boon Nature smiles on all beside!
Where the winds play,—where great green branches wave,
And lilies softly lapse upon the wave,—
Forth with the Sun, with heart that sings within,
In sense of joy that hath no taint of sin;
A song of Summer born, that feels, instinct,
How near with Earth the soul of man is link'd,
And thus through earth with heaven, that still foreshows,
In bright, sweet symbols, how the future glows,
How freshly, gladsomely, and purely Bliss
May yet, in man's true life, atone for this!

Spirits of holiest gift have been at range,
O'er stream and forest, to effect this change;—
What potent spells, what breath of balm, they brought,
By which the magic of this birth was wrought;—
How did they whisper on the bankside, where
Lurk'd all the hooded flowers, in shame and fear;
Hush'd through long months of winter, while the sway
Of that cold tyrant threaten'd still his prey,
'Till that warm whisper to the clod which hid,
Brought each sweet virgin to unclose her lid,
And won the nun-like daisy from her cell,
In sweet obedience to the grateful spell,—
Blessing the shrine that shelter'd her so well!
What legions of bright angels, far and wide,
Have sped, that earth should waken up in pride;
A single breath, one short sweet night—the moon
Of April only watching through its noon—
And, with the dawn, how wondrous was the show
That hail'd the sun from thousand plains below;
With song,—though faint, how sweet!—and scents so rare,
As if the flowers were wedded to the air,
That nothing did but drink of the delight,
With wings diffused in never-resting flight,
As conscious, in the rapture of such taste,
Of no fatigue, in all that world of waste.

Oh! with a range as wide as his, we speed
To each fair empire of the newly freed;
With hearts as free as any of the race,
That glow and gladden in the sun's embrace.
How spreads the various picture as we go!
Hills greenly stretch aloft, and vales below;
The mountain wears no more the brow of age,
And nature flies her gloomy hermitage,

Now desolate no longer,—to abide,
With birds and blossoms, by the brooklet's side;
How prattle the glad waters, as she brings,
Her gayest buds to nurture at their springs;
Pleased with the song of kindred, which declares
Her joy in these, and all her beauties theirs!
Banks, on each side, slope down with fringe of green,
To kiss the silvery waves that sing between,
Sing with fit chant to the cathedral trees,
Through which, still sleepless, trolls the thoughtless breeze,
With music most like that of swarming bees!

The song is still an echo to the toil,—
The heart is tutor'd when the sinews moil;
Mere song were something vicious,—but the strain
That tells of solace for the limbs and brain—
Which call for respite for due service done,
In fields of meet succession with the sun,—
This brings a healthful nurture, and, if right
The duty done, we look for the delight.
The charm that still beguiles us at the close
Of the day-labor, freshening its repose,
Is the sweet nourishment for strength anew,
The future toil, or conquest, to pursue.
Thus sings the earth at seasons,—thus we hear
The bird and insect joyous far and near;
A choral hymn the nation's toil preludes,
And the glad creature frolics ere it broods.
Full of a sweet and wise intelligence,
Not simply fashion'd for the idiot's sense,
The voices that we hear from plain and grove,
They speak in gladness, for they breathe of love;
And love is the great duty which implies
Toil for the drudge and study for the wise;

Both earnest ever in the fond pursuit,
That, in the very tillage, finds the fruit!
Earth has a labor in her womb below!—
The watchful ear may catch the murmuring flow
Of mingling strifes and sounds,—the strifes of toil,
Of those who sing and serve, for those who moil.
The mighty mother, with mysterious art,
Hath fashion'd well each agent in her mart;
Various in product, as in office, still,
Each, without murmur, follows at her will;
No void unfill'd beneath her searching eye,
No realm unwatch'd, of water, earth, or sky;—
There runs the lizard o'er the freshest flowers,
As death gives shadow to our sunniest hours;—
There, the gay butterfly, on varied wing,
Pursues the insect that it cannot sting;—
There goes the coiling serpent, with raised crest,
And warning rattle, to his slimy nest,—
Vex'd by pursuit he slowly wins his way,
Nor seems unwilling to prolong his stay,—
Too closely press'd he would not shun the strife,
And he who takes, must battle for, his life.

Turn where the dove,—meet contrast!—with his mate
Just won, delighted with his new estate,
Lingers beside the path a fearless thing,
Nor claims the succor of his idle wing.
Nature endows him with the season's sense,
Where all is breathing hope and confidence,—
And, heedful of her interest, man decrees
His safety from the fowler. Thus we seize
Our sweetest lessons of preserving good,
From the dumb nature and unthinking mood,—

For it were base to wrong the faith implied,
Which seeks our steps, nor hurries once aside,
Though life is dearer now, so full of love,
And fear is the first instinct of the dove!

NIGHT STORM.

This tempest sweeps the Atlantic!—Nevasink
  Is howling to the Capes! Grim Hatteras cries
Like thousand damned ghosts, that on the brink
  Lift their dark hands and threat the threatening skies;
Surging through foam and tempest, old Román
  Hangs o'er the gulf, and, with his cavernous throat,
  Pours out the torrent of his wolfish note,
And bids the billows bear it where they can!
Deep calleth unto deep, and, from the cloud,
  Launches the bolt, that, bursting o'er the sea,
Rends for a moment the thick pitchy shroud,
  And shows the ship the shore beneath her lea:—
Start not, dear wife, no dangers here betide,—
And see, the boy still sleeping at your side!

"WELL," SANG A BLUE-EYED DAMSEL.

I.

"Well," sang a blue-eyed damsel, half hidden by a wood
Of bearded oaks, that on the banks of Etiwando stood;
"Give me such days of beauty forever by these shores,
Such glimpses of this noble stream as to the sea it pours;

The palm, the pine, the song of birds, and this gay realm of flowers,
That sweetens now, with smile and scent, this ancient home of ours;
And not your Texian world of wealth, your wild and wondrous gleams,
Your giant herds, your mighty birds, your silver-bedded streams;
No, nor the glimpse of golden spoils, that tempt the eager eye,
As half display'd, in Mexique vales, with scarce a guard they lie,
Shall move me to repine with thoughts that pomp and wealth bedeck,
No more, with rich and jewell'd pride, our Carolina's neck.

II.

For, stately in her beauty still, and stainless in her fame,
She rises like a queen of grace, while others sink in shame;
The wealth so dear in other eyes, the bribe that wins the rest,
Shows basely in her matron glance, moves scorn within her breast;
True to her proud example still, her sons pursue their way,
And wisdom gives their counsels weight, and virtue yields them sway:
Ah! shall her daughters heed the prize of selfish, stranger lands,
Nor all prefer, which she bestows, whose nobler worth commands?
What though her sons no wealth declare when they approach to woo,
Yet sprung from noble stocks they come, and like their sires are true;
With one of these, but build for me my cottage on these shores,
And all the wealth of Mexico, and Texas too, be yours."

NATURE'S FAVORITE.

Some men are Nature's favorites; they were born
Beneath the canopy of trees in May,
When Beauty fills the sky, and from the bud
Breathes the fresh odor; when the merry birds
Go singing through the air, and whirls aloft,
In maddest paroxysms of delight,
The wanton mimic of a thousand tongues,
Pouring a torrent of impetuous song
That stuns the grove to silence. She has been
The gentle mother, leading them away
From the immure of the unnatural town,
To the free homestead of the ancient trees;
Bestowing them the life that there alone
Makes life a dear romance. They have gone forth
And brought her flowers, and fill'd her lap with them;
And she has told them, of the life of each,
Most ravishing stories. Oh! how very sweet
Thus to be taught! No musty books—no rules,
In dull, damp dungeons, shutting out the sky,
And drudging the free fancy with a weight
That leaves it wingless after.—'Tis my joy
That I have thus been tutored! Nature came
And took me for her charge when I was young,
And brought me up herself. I was not taught
Vain histories of schoolmen—men of cloud
And vapor, with philosophies of straw,
That strive in bubble-hunting. Ancient tongues
That, having answer'd for their day, had gone
Into forgetfulness, ne'er tortured mine!
Destined for life—the present and the real—

Condemn'd to its necessities, and full
Of all its glorious conquests—its new truths
And coming victories—I was not vex'd
With frigid phantoms of philosophy
At midnight in my chamber—ghosts of doubt
And speculation, that, in all their eyes,
No speculation wore—when the broad heavens
Were hung with forms of rare intelligence,
Teachers of heart and fancy—twiring forms,
The herds of eyes, the numerous flocking stars,
Gazing down on me, and imploring mine!
The present was my own! I made it mine,—
Enjoying it, the past was mine as well;—
I lived the life of the world, as still the world
Has render'd life to the living—yielding man
Experience of his father in his own;
Trod the same ground that they had travell'd o'er,
The sage and soldier of dim ages gone,
In the same company.—What did I need,
With the same feelings and affections fill'd—
For I drew milk from breasts which they had drawn—
To toil through their adventures? They were mine,
Already in my progress. I was taught
By the same tutor—happy that I was!

SONNETS.—DAWNINGS OF FANCY.

I.

Voices are on the winds!—I hear them now
Foating around me, musical and sweet
As are the waves of ocean when they meet,
Combing and flashing round some sunny prow;—

Then, as if seeking softer melody,
  Back shrinking from the lately sought embrace;
Even as the new-won virgin, bashfully,
  Love in her heart, but fear upon her face!
How exquisite, and yet how sad withal,
These murmurs, that fond meeting, and faint fall!
They swell upon my spirit's ear by night,
  And morning brings them on her purple wings,—
  Oh, Fancy!—as if feeding at thy springs,
They took from thee all voices of delight.

II.

Nor only of delight! The music swells
  To sorrow, as the rosy day declines;
  And folding up his wing among the vines,
The wandering zephyr of his garden tells
By the Euphrates.—Exiled from its flowers,
His wing is weary—he forgets its powers,
  And his heart sinks with the decaying light,—
Most wretched, the Capricious! three long hours!
  Ere dawn he plumes his wing for fresher flight,
Dreams of enduring joys in other bowers,
  And wild his song of rapture that same night!
Rapture in sadness finds his fit repose,
  As toil in sleep; and Fancy's self rebels,
Denied her evening bower and brief repose.

III.

Whoso denies this wholesome, natural want,
  Endangers her existence! She must bask
  Among the woods she rifles,—free from task,
The master's eye, and hard command,—and nap,
Where nature yields her groves and matron lap;—

Where birds sing slumber, and the hunted doe,
Assured of safety, stops a while to pant!
Thus resting she arises, prompt and strong,
With eye all vigor,—wing prepared to go,
Rapt, heavenward, in the upward-gushing song!—
Poised like the great sea-eagle in his state,
Sovereign 'mongst rolling clouds, careering free,
Or, like the meeker lark, at heaven's own gate,
That, in her love, proclaims her liberty.

SONNETS.—POPULAR MISDIRECTION.

I.

How went the cry in Greece, an ominous sound,
When Elatea fell—disaster dread,
Presaging Chœronea! Is the tale read—
Is there no moral in the history found,
That we grope on, with tidings each day brought
Of outposts lost to the enemy—our foe
That saps our liberties through the popular thought,
And in our stupor, brings our virtue low.
Yet may we not despair—a nation sleeps
Not always:—she may need repose for strength,
And, at the perilous moment, break at length
Her bonds, as from his lair the lion leaps
To conquest, in the pride of all his powers:—
Ah! Chœronea never shall be ours!

II.

We are no more a people of the free;
A change is on our fortunes—we forget

The high design that made our liberty
A thing of hope and wonder, and have set
Our hearts on earthly idols, vanities,
The childish wants of fashion, and a crowd
Of sordid appetites that clamor loud,
The eager ear of emptiness to please.
The nobler toils that only to high thought,
Patience and inward struggle yield the prize,
Are ours no longer;—we no more devise
Conquests of self and fortune;—all unwrought
That glorious vein our fathers struck of yore,
Which, left unwork'd, but makes us doubly poor.

III.

Sudden, the mighty nation goes not down,
There is no mortal fleetness in its fate;
Time,—many omens—still anticipate
The peril that removes its iron crown
And shakes its homes with ruin! Centuries
Fleet by in the long struggle; and great men
Rush mounted to the breach where victory lies,
And personal virtue brings us life again!
Were it not thus, my country!—were this hope
Not ours,—the present were a fearful time;
Vainly we summon mighty hearts to cope
With thy oppressors,—vanity and crime—
These ride thee, as upon some noble beast,
The scoundrel jackal, hurrying to his feast.

IV.

Would we recall our virtues and our peace?
The ancient teraphim we must restore;
Bring back the household gods we loved of yore,

And bid our yearning for strange idols cease.
Our worship still is in the public way,—
  Our altars are the market-place;—our prayer
  Strives for meet welcome in our neighbor's ear,
And heaven affects us little while we pray.
  We do not call on God, but man, to hear;—
Nor even on his affections;—we have lost
  The sweet humility of our home desires,
  And flaunt in foreign fashions at rare cost;
Nor God our souls, nor man our hearts inspires,
  Nor aught that should to God or man be dear.

THE FIRST DREAM OF LOVE.

I.

Soft, oh! how softly sleeping
  Shadow'd by beauty she lies,
Dreams, as of rapture, creeping,
  Smile by smile, over her eyes;
Lips, oh! how sweetly parting,
  As if the delight between,
With its own warm pulses starting,
  Strove to go forth and be seen.

II.

'Tis Love, born newly of fancy,
  Brushing her heart with his plume,
That wakes, with his necromancy,
  On the tale-telling cheek the bloom;—

Ah! long as a fancy gladden,
Sweet Love, the delighted heart,
Nor ever with passion madden,
Nor ever with hope depart.

HAUNTED WOODS.—A FRAGMENT.

These woods have all been haunted, and the power
Of spells still harbors in each tree and flower;
The groves still keep, and hide, a various race,
Whom we should vainly labor to displace;
Nor were it wise, so long as we deplore
The failing virtues that we knew before;
Those precious sympathies that loved to find,
In speechless nature, voices for mankind:
That still acknowledged spirits in the beam,
Gnomes in the mountain, undines in the stream;
Dryads in woods, not near so wild as these,
And sweet, sad nymphs, that hide in ancient trees!
Here, to my faith, they still abide, and crown
The dark deep groves with beauties not their own:
Still, 'midst the sacred ring, in doubtful light,
The tricksy elves go dancing through the night;
Meet the capricious fairies, where they glide,
Sparkling in moonlight, by Saluda's side,
And, join'd in mimic battle, or in sport
More genial, find the happy night too short!
Thus the sad Indian, ever as he flew
O'er these smooth waters in his birch canoe,
Beheld afar, in light of summer eves,
Wild forms and faces glimmering through the leaves:

Bright, star-like eyes flash'd out from thickest shades,
And, softly sudden, laugh'd ascending maids;
Strange antic shapes, half mingled with the pine,
Shriek'd out, as baffled in some foul design;
Shook their fierce torches at each flitting grace,
And stamp'd in fury o'er their trysting-place;
Trampled on flowers to fairy fingers dear,
And flouted joys they had not soul to share;—
Then fled to genial swamps and thickets dark,
Where the faint glow-worm shrouds her little spark.
An envious tribe, that, ere the white man came,
The dusky savage well had learn'd to name;
Mischievous elves, that charm'd his sylvan bow,
Warp'd the shaft, erring, sent against his foe;
'Wilder'd his footsteps in the search of prey,
And led his dog aside, the scentless way;
Still, when the day was done, beside him crept,
And fill'd his dreams with horror while he slept;
Nor gave him respite, till, with hallowing rite,
His priests, with incense, soothed the demon's spite!
In these the red-man's faith was no less strong
Than that which Allegmania kept so long:
A realm as various peopled, in his creed,
As Albion recognized, and knew indeed;
With native instincts, conscious of a tie,
'Twixt earth and air, that lifts humanity,
Supplying still a void between our race
And that we dream of in the world of space;
Showing faint glimpses, shapes of cloud and light,
Of fancy born, yet precious to the sight,
And still appealing, when we droop or dream,
To worlds and hopes which thus bestow their gleam;
A light, though faint, to show us where to rise,
And wings, though feeble, which may pierce the skies.

Ah! from these woods they do not yet depart,
They win our worship still, they soothe our heart:
The ancient fancies still as strongly glow,
And still the antic shadows come and go;
Strange aspects haunt the forests, to our eyes,
As fill'd the red-man's home with mysteries;
We hear the wild chant of the eldritch race,
And see them flitting in their midnight chase:
They live for us as them. Our woodman sees,
Even now, quaint masks that lurk behind the trees;
Possess with spells that haunt him as he speeds,
Inspire his terrors, or arrest his deeds;
Until his soul grows full of faith, for which
His reason finds no answer and no speech:
He deems all true the red-man taught of spells,
Still loathly lingers where the demon dwells,
And still imagines that the charmed song,
Among the pines, will harbor in them long;
Not simply winds, communing with the boughs,
But sounds of brooding myriads, as they drowse.

THE STATESMAN.

Well, if it be that Fortune's sun is setting,
And friends that cheer'd thee in thy happier day
Turn from thy griefs, thy glorious gifts forgetting,
And faithless prove when faith had been thy stay:
Thou art thine own mind's master, though forsaken
Of those who came and crouch'd while all was bright;
Thou bear'st a soul that storms have never shaken,
And resolute will to tread the path of right.

And this is still to conquer, though we perish!
'Tis no defeat, when, steadfast in our hearts,
We yet, o'er all, the sacred purpose cherish,
Though every hope that grew with it departs;—
The will that moves us to the strife unquailing,
Still keeps the faith unchanging it believes;
Though in the hope that dream'd of conquest failing,
The future still avenges and—retrieves!

And, to thyself thus true in every fortune,
The very foes must honor who o'erthrow:
Calm, steadfast, firm—oh! why shouldst thou impórtune
The fate whose seasons ever come and go?
Thou hast no loss in ever-losing struggle,
For that thou strivest still in Duty's cause;
Rejecting still the bauble and the juggle,
True to thyself, the virtues and the laws.

SLEEPING CHILD.

My little girl sleeps on my arm all night,
And seldom stirs, save, when with playful wile,
I bid her turn, and lift her lip to mine,—
Which, even as she sleeps, she does; and sometimes then,
Half muttering in her slumbers, she declares
Her love for me is boundless. Then I take
The precious promise closer to my arms,
And, by my action—for, in such a time,
My lips can find no utterance for my heart—
Give her assurance meet that she is there

Most treasured of my jewels. Thus, tenderly,
Hour after hour, with no desire of sleep,
I watch above that large amount of hope,
With eyes made doubly vigilant by their tears,
Until the stars wane, and the yellow moon
Walks forth into the night.

THE GRAPE-VINE SWING.

Lithe and long as the serpent train,
  Springing and clinging from tree to tree,
Now darting upward, now down again,
  With a twist and a twirl that are strange to see:
Never took serpent a deadlier hold,
  Never the cougar a wilder spring,
Strangling the oak with the boa's fold,
  Spanning the beech with the condor's wing.

Yet no foe that we fear to seek—
  The boy leaps wild to thy rude embrace;
Thy bulging arms bear as soft a cheek
  As ever on lover's breast found place:
On thy waving train is a playful hold
  Thou shalt never to lighter grasp persuade;
While a maiden sits in thy drooping fold,
  And swings and sings in the noonday shade!

Oh! giant strange of our southern woods,
  I dream of thee still in the well-known spot,
Though our vessel strains o'er the ocean floods,
  And the northern forest beholds thee not;

I think of thee still with a sweet regret,
  As the cordage yields to my playful grasp—
Dost thou spring and cling in our woodlands yet?
  Does the maiden still swing in thy giant clasp?

SONNET.—THE OLD MASTERS.

I REVERENCE these old masters—men who sung
  Or painted, not for love of praise or fame;
Who heeded not the popular eye or tongue,
  And craved no present honors for their name;
Who toil'd because they sorrow'd! In their hearts
  The secret of their inspiration lay;—
When these were by the oppressor's minions wrung,
  The terrible pang to utterance forced its way.
And hence it is, their passionate song imparts,
  To him who listens, a like sensible woe,
That moves him much to turn aside and pray
  As if his personal grief had present claim;—
Thus Danté found his muse,—the pride and shame
Of Florence;—Milton thus, and Michael Angelo!

SEASIDE SOLITUDE.

How, in this castled battlement that stands
  A grim and ghastly giant o'er the sea,
As if to guard the subject smiling lands,
  Safe kept in meet subjection, and so free,—

How, with a silent sadness do I love,
When night winds all unfetter'd fly abroad,
And the pale moon, in peerless car above,
Moves onward like some melancholy god,
In very sadness of sublimity,
Bemoaning the great state which makes him lone;
How do I love to watch above the deep,
To hear winds whistle and the surges sweep,
And share the sadness and the silence then,
More full of speech for Thought than crowds of men;—
And drink in lessons of the great expanse,
That teaches still the far Eternity;
The world itself laid bare beneath the glance,
And all made subject to the soul and eye:
While still with choir of storm the great sea rolls
Its anthem, fitting conflicts of great souls;
A mighty heart of passion; even in sleep
Heaving with saddest moans, that show the strife how deep.

MENTAL SOLITUDE.

The bells are gayly pealing, and the crowd,
The thoughtless and the happy, with light hearts,
Are moving by the casement:—I can hear
The rude din of their voices and the tramp
Of hurrying footsteps o'er the pavement nigh,
And my soul sickens in its solitude.
Each hath his own companion, and can bend,
As to a centre of enlivening warmth,
To some abode of happiness and mirth;—

Greeted by pleasant voices,—words of cheer,
And hospitality,—whose outstretch'd hand
Draws in the smiling stranger at the door.
They go not singly by, as I should go,
But hanging on fond arms. They muse not thoughts
Of strange and timid sadness, such as mine;
But dreams of promised joys are in their souls,
And, in their ears, the music of kind words
That make them happy.
I, alas!—alone,
Of all this populous city, must remain,
Shut up in my dim chamber,—or, perchance,
If I dare venture out among the crowd,
Will be among, not of, them; and appear—
For that I have not walk'd with them before,
Nor been a sharer in their festivals—
As some strange monster brought from foreign climes
But to be baited with the thoughtless gaze,
The rude remark, cold eye and sneering lip,
Till I grow savage, and become, at last,
The rugged brute they do behold in me.

Talk not to me of solitude!—thou hast
But little of its meaning in thy thought,
And less in thy observance. It is not
To go abroad into the wilderness,
Or dart upon the ocean;—to behold
The broad expanse of prairie or of wood,
And deem,—for that the human form is not
A dweller on its bosom,—(with its shrill
And senseless clamor oft, breaking away
The melancholy of its sweet serene,
That, like a mantle, lifted by the breath
Of some presiding deity, o'erwraps,

Making all mystery and gentleness,)—
That solitude is thine. Thy thought is vain!—
That is no desert, where the heart is free
To its own spirit-worship;—where the soul,
Untainted by the breath of busy life,
Converses with the elements, and grows
To a familiar notion of the skies,
Which are its portion. That is liberty!
And the sweet quiet of the waving woods,
The solemn song of ocean—the blue skies,
That hang like canopies above the plain,
And lend their richest hues to the fresh flowers
That carpet its broad bosom,—are most full
Of solace and the sweetest company!
I love these teeming voids,—their voiceless words,
So full of truest teaching. God is there,
Walking beside me, as, in elder times,
He walk'd beside the shepherds, and gave ear
To the first whisper'd doubts of early thought,
And prompted it aright. Such wilds to me
Seem full of friends and teachers. In the trees,
The never-ceasing billows, winds and leaves,
Feather'd and finny tribes,—all that I see,
All that I hear and fancy,—I have friends,
That soothe my heart to meekness, lift my soul
To loftiest hope, and, to my toiling mind,
Impart just thoughts and safest principles.
They have a language I can understand,
When man is voiceless, or with vexing words
Offends my judgment. They have melodies
That soothe my heart to peace, even as the dame
Soothes her dear infant with a song of sounds
That have no meaning for the older ear,
And mock the seeming wise. Even wint'ry clouds

Have charms for me amid their cheerlessness,
And hang out images of love and light,
At evening, 'mong the stars,—or, ere the dusk
That specks so stilly the gray twilight's wing,
With many colors sweetly intermixt:—
And, when the breezes gather with the night,
And shake the roof-tree under which I sleep,
'Till the dried leaves enshroud me, then I hear
Voices of love and friendship in mine ear,
That speak to me in soothing, idle sounds,
And flatter me, I am not *all* alone.

Darting o'er ocean's blue domain, or far
In the deep woods, where the gaunt Choctaw yet
Lingers to perish;—galloping o'er the bald
Yet beautiful plain of prairie,—I become
Part of the world around me, and my heart
Forgets its singleness and solitude.
But, in the city's crowd, where I am one
'Mongst many,—many who delight to throw
The altar I have worshipp'd in the dust—
And trample my best offerings—and revile
My prayers—and scorn the tribute, which I still
Devoted with full heart and purest mind
To the all-wooing and all-visible God,
In nature ever present—having no mood
With mine, nor any sympathy with aught
That I have loved;—'tis there that I am taught
The essence and the form of solitude—
'Tis there that I am lonely!—'mid a world,
To feel I have no business in that world;
And when I hear men laughing, not to join,
Because their cause of mirth is hid from me:—
To feel the lights of the assembly glare
And fever all my senses, till I grow

Stupid, or sad and boorish;—then return,
Sick of false joys and misnamed festivals,
To my own gloomy chambers, and old books
That counsel me no more, and cease to cheer,
And, like an aged dotard, with dull truths,
Significant of nothings, often told,
And told to be denied, that wear me out,
In patience, as in peace;—and then to lie,
And watch the lazy-footed night away,
With fretful nerve, that sorrows when it flies!—
To feel the day advancing which must bring
The weary night once more, that I had pray'd
Forever gone! To hear the laboring wind
Depart, in melting murmurs, with the tide,
And, ere the morn, to catch his sullen roar,
Mocking the ear, with watching overdone,
Returning from his rough lair on the seas!
If life be now denied me;—if I sit
Within my chamber when all other men
Are revelling;—if I must be alone,
Musing on idle minstrelsy and lore—
Weaving sad fancies with the fleeting hours,
And making fetters of the folding thoughts,
That crush into my heart, and canker there;—
If nature calls me to her company,
Takes up my time, teaches me legends strange,
Prattles of wild conceits that have no form,
Save in extravagant fancy of old years,
When spirits were abroad;—if still she leads
My steps away from the establish'd walks,
And, with seducing strains of syren song,
Beguiles my spirit far among the groves
Of fairy-trodden forests, that I may
Wrestle with dreams, that wear away my days,

And make my nights a peopled realm which steals
Sleep from my eyes, and peace;—if she ordains
That I shall win no human blandishment,
Nor, in the present hour, as other men,
Find meet advantage:—she will sure provide,
Just recompense—a better sphere and life,
Atoning for the past, and full of hope
In a long future;—or she treats me now,
Unkindly, and I may not help complaint.

"SUCH, O BEAUTY!"

Such, O Beauty! the amorous strains
Sung in thy praises in happier hours;
Then the free spirit rejoiced in chains,
But only because they were framed of flowers;
When they grew strong, with flight of years,
To fetter the heart of the youthful rover,
The spirit felt troubled with many fears,
And the time for laughing in chains was over.
Beauty, yes!
The spirit felt troubled with many fears,
And the time for laughing in chains was over.

And yet, O Beauty! thy chains, though breaking,
And sterner grown in the strifes of men,
A look, or a lay of thine will waken
A rapture such as they kindled then;
And sad, in its very freedom sighing,
The spirit will turn for thy smile and say,

Ah! better far in her bondage lying,
Than cheerlessly thus waste life away;
Beauty, yes!
Better far in thy bondage lying,
Than cheerlessly thus waste life away.

SONNETS.—THE CAPRICE OF THE SENSIBILITIES.

I.

True,—love hath its perils and denials—takes
Its color from the cloud; and, with a will,
Born of capricious fancy, sometimes aches
With its own raptures, wild and wilful still;—
Is pleased to grieve o'er griefs that may not rise,
And finds a tempest in serenest skies;—
Suspects where it should worship, and grows cold
When most the mutual fire is warm and bright,—
And is, self-doom'd, a stranger to delight,
When most the entwining arms of truth would fold
The estranged one in the happiest heart-embrace!
But these are natural aspects in the strife
Of nature, worn by all of mortal race,
And prove far less of suffering than of life.

II.

It is, indeed, the nature that acquires,
Even from these changing aspects, a new birth;
Caprice is but the sleep of the desires,
As sadness is the sweet repose of mirth;—
And all the dear variety of earth

Is so much fuel to renew her fires!
The eye that saddens now, unknowing why,
To-morrow, with as little consciousness,
Will blaze with freshest lustres,—as the sky,
Late sorrowing with a cloudy, cold distress,
Anon, in all her bright of blue appears!—
Love puts on strangest aspects, that confess
A nature, not a will; and in her tears
The very hope is born whose birth alone can bless!

III.

Not such are love's true sorrows;—in her fate
Lie deeper perils—dooms more desolate!—
Hers are the worst of fortune, since they grow
From the excessive exquisite in life,
She perils in the field of human strife;—
The sensibilities—the hopes that flow
From those superior fountains of the soul,
Where all is but a dying and a birth,
A resurrection and a sacrifice;
Which, though it happen on the lowliest hearth,
Is yet the breaking of a golden bowl,
Still destined to renewal,—for new ties
And other sunderings,—and that mortal pain,
To know that death and birth alike are vain!

IV.

That stroke which shatters the devoted heart,
Its faith in the beloved one—the sweet trust,
That felt him genial and believed him just,
And rudely rends the linkéd souls apart,
Denied the old communion—is the blow
Most mortal, that the mortal meets below!

The death of the affections—the true life
That from humanity pluck'd the cruel sting,
Which, born of its first faltering, doom'd the strife
Heal'd only by the true heart's minist'ring!—
There is no other sorrow, born of love,
Which love itself can heal not;—and for this,
'Twere idle any ministry to prove,—
Since love, in loss of faith, hath lost all right to bliss!

V.

Thus is it that the heart which other woe
But strengthens with new tendrils,—when it shakes,
Doom'd to the lightning terrors of this blow,
Sinks, shivering with the bolt, and sudden breaks.
Fibres knit close as tendrils of the vine,
Lock'd fast and clinging to the upholding pine,—
Even as the faith is rent, which was the tree,
Fix'd steadfast and high-towering o'er all,
To which the affections clung, nor fear'd to fall,—
So perish all the hopes and sympathies:—
A thousand veins, and ruptured arteries
Lie sunder'd at the stroke, all bleeding free;
Wasting their precious streams upon the roots
Of the great tree that never more bears fruits!

VI.

No fruits, no life!—what matter if the tree
Still lifts a brow erect against the sky,
Great shaft and mighty branches,—if there be
No blossom, in his season, for the eye—
No green of leaf, no gorgeous pageantry,
Wooing the prolific and embracing air
To harbor in the noontide, and to brood

Still murmuring music in his slumberous mood,
While birds sit swinging with their young ones there;
Their life a summer day or less—not long,
But still a life of blossom and of song,—
The blossom and the song being each a birth,
Born only of the fruit, and born of earth,
For earth, that still love's promise might be fair!

MOTHER AND CHILD.

The wind blew wide the casement, and within—
It was the loveliest picture! a sweet child
Lay in its mother's arms, and drew its life,
In pauses, from the fountain,—the white round,
Part shaded by loose tresses, soft and dark,
Concealing, but still showing, the fair realm
Of so much rapture, as green shadowing trees
With beauty shroud the brooklet. The red lips
Were parted, and the cheek upon the breast
Lay close, and, like the young leaf of the flower,
Wore the same color—rich, and warm, and fresh:—
And such alone are beautiful. Its eye,
A full, blue gem, most exquisitely set,
Look'd archly on its world—the little imp,
As if it knew, even then, that such a wealth
Were not for all;—and with its playful hands
It drew aside the robe that hid its realm,
And peep'd and laugh'd aloud, and so it laid
Its head upon the shrine of such pure joys,
And laughing, slept. And while it slept, the tears
Of the sweet mother fell upon its cheek—

Tears, such as fall from April skies, and bring
The sunlight after. They were tears of joy;
And the true heart of that young mother then
Grew lighter, and she sang unconsciously
The silliest ballad-song that ever yet
Subdued the nursery's voices, and brought sleep
To fold her sabbath wings above its couch.

COME, WHEN THE EVENING INTO SILENCE CLOSES.

I.

Come, when the evening into silence closes,
When the pale stars steal out upon the blue;
And watchful zephyrs to the virgin roses,
Descend in sweetest murmurs, bringing dew;
Come to the heart that sadly then declining,
Would need a soothing day has never known;
Come, like those stars upon the night-cloud shining,
And bless me with a beauty all thine own.
Beauty of songs and tears,
And blessed tremulous fears—
Beauty that shrinks from every gaze but one:
Ah! for the dear delight,
The music of thy sight,
I yield the day, the lonely day, and live for night alone.

II.

It is no grief that in the night hour only,
The love that is our solace may be sought;
Day mocks the soul that is in rapture lonely,
And voices break the spell with sorrow fraught;

Better that single, silent star above us,
And still around us that subduing hush,
As of some brooding wing, ordain'd to love us,
That spells the troubled soul and soothes its gush;
Shadows that still beguile,
Sorrows that wear a smile,
Griefs that in dear delusions lead away—
And oh! that whispering tone,
Breathed, heard, by one alone,
That, as it dies—a wordless sound—speaks more than words can say

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SONNETS.

OBJECTS WHICH INFLUENCE THE AMBITIOUS NATURE.

I. TROPHIES.—HOW PLANTED.

The trophies which shine out for eager eyes,
In youth's first hour of progress, and delude
With promise dearest to ambition's mood,
Lie not within life's limits; but arise
Beyond the realm of sunset;—phantoms bright,
Glowing above the tomb; having their roots
Even in the worshipper's heart;—from whence their fruits,
And all that thence grows precious to man's sight!
Thence, too, their power to lure from beaten ways
That Love hath set with flowers; and thence the spell,
'Gainst which the blood denied may ne'er rebel,
That leads to sleepless nights and toilsome days,
And sacrifice of all those human joys,
That, to the ambitious nature, seem but toys.

II. WHERE PLANTED.

It is the error of the impatient heart
To hope undying gifts, even while the strife
Is worst;—and, struggling 'gainst its mortal part,
The glorious Genius, laboring still for life,
Springs even from death to birth! 'Tis from his tomb
The amaranth rises which must wreathe his brow,
And crown his memory with unfading bloom!—
Rooted in best affections, it will grow.
Though water'd by sad tears, and watch'd by pride
Made humble in rejection! Love denied,
Shall tend it through all seasons, and shall give
Her never-failing tenderness,—though still
Be the proud spirit and the unyielding will,
That, through the mortal, made the immortal live!

III. TRIUMPH.

The grave but ends the struggle! Follows then
The triumph, which, superior to the doom,
Grows loveliest, and looks best, to mortal men,
Purple in beauty, towering o'er the tomb!
Oh! with the stoppage of the impulsive tide
That vex'd the impatient heart with needful strife,
The soul that is Hope's living leaps to life,
And shakes her fragrant plumage far and wide!
Eyes follow then in worship which but late
Frown'd in defiance;—and the timorous herd,
That sleekly waited for another's word,
Grow bold, at last, to bring,—obeying Fate,—
The tribute of their praise, but late denied,—
Tribute of homage which is sometimes—hate!

IV. GLORY AND ENDURING FAME.

Thus Glory hath her being! Thus she stands
Star-crown'd—a high divinity of woe:
Her temples fill, her columns crown all lands,
Where lofty attribute is known below.
For her the smokes ascend, the waters flow,
The grave foregoes his prey, the soul goes free;
The gray rock gives out music,—hearthstones grow
To temples at her word—her footprints see,
On ruins, that are thus made holiest shrines,
Where Love may win devotion, and the heart,
That with the fire of Genius inly pines,
May find the guidance of a kindred art—
And, from the branch of that eternal tree,
Pluck fruits at once of death and immortality!

THE SWALLOWS.

With no signal of their coming,
With no promise of the spring,
With the dawning hark their humming,
And, across the window-pane,
See each gayly flashing wing,—
As delighted to discover,
While about the eaves they hover,
That all's safe at home again!

Such a merry, screaming clattèr,
Such a chorus of delight;—
Something more must be the matter,
Than the simple certainty

Of the savage winter's flight,
And their ancient homes secure;
Still upon the slender ashes,
Hanging free their calabashes,*
And still wide each aperture!

Friend of pigeon and of chicken,
Lately trembling at the hawk,
Well may that old ruffian sicken,
As he, slowly circling, sees
Those who come his sports to balk,—
Those that swift on arrowy pinion,
Drive him from his dread dominion,
And arrest his butcheries.†

Modest champions of the feeble,
Thus content in dwellings rude,
Joyful, and with happy treble,
Singing still in gladsome mood,
Ever happy, ever busy,
Whirling still in circles dizzy,
Making gay the solitude;—

Ye are welcome!—at your coming,
With your motion wild and glad,
Still rejoicing with your humming,
Hearts but lately all so sad;

* The gourd or calabash, hung upon ash or cypress poles, being, as every one knows, the home usually assigned to the swallow at all Southern farmsteads.

† The swallow is cherished, as he protects the chicken from the hawk. This he does by darting *above* him, and descending rapidly, with flapping wings, above the eyes of the outlaw.

Tidings sweet ye bring to me,
Singing ever—Winter's flying,
Spring is nigh our buds supplying,
And the birds and blessings free!

SONNET.—DEATH IN YOUTH.

They tell us—whom the gods love die in youth!
'Tis something to die innocent and pure;
But death without performance is most sure
Ambition's martyrdom—worst death, in truth,
To the aspiring temper, fix'd in thought
Of high achievement! Happier far are they
Who, as the Prophet of the Ancients taught,
Hail the bright finish of a perfect day!
With fullest consummation of each aim,
That wrought the hope of manhood—with the crown
Fix'd to their mighty brows, of amplest fame—
Who smile at death's approaches and lie down
Calmly, as one beneath the shade-tree yields,
Satisfied of the morrow and green fields.

SUNSET PIECE.

All day had we been gliding o'er the seas,
With swan-like motion; for the skies were fair,
The waters smooth, or by a winning breeze,
But rippled into beauty far and near;
Our bark shot onward with a glad career,

Like a brave steed with motion swift and free;
And now, as to the growing land we near,
Its headlands rising into majesty,
The mighty sun prepares to seek the embracing sea.

It is a sovereign's burial! O'er his brow
Hangs the imperial crown, a golden sphere;
While dark, in sullen majesty below,
The waters gathering in their mighty lair,
Rise, swelling into mountains! Far and near,
Mellow'd to soften'd twilight, a repose,
Sweet as the mild breath of the autumn air,
Is down upon the earth at evening's close:
No light too strongly beams, no breath too rudely blows.

But all above and all around,—the all
That links the visible to humanity—
Wound to a pleasant and seductive fall,
Woos the worn heart and wins the weary eye;
A pale star o'er yon steep acclivity,
Beckons the modest evening to her side,
Ere yet the dying monarch has thrown by
His purple, and, with glance of love and pride,
Sends peace throughout her empire, far and wide.

A freshness in the breeze, a pleasant breath,
As of a living odor, late from vales
Undimm'd by shadow, undeprived by death,
Of greenest verdure or of sweetest gales—
At fits it swells aloft, and then exhales
Away in music,—while a muttering sound,
As of the ocean when the tempest wails,
Breaks through the yielding tree-tops—all around
The day droops faintly clear, but purples still the ground.

Far off, the tall rocks, in his latest glance,
Glow like Vesuvius! On each rugged brow
Capricious fires ascend, recede, advance,
Down sinking, then up rushing, as the flow
Of waves that seek the beach when seas are low,
Fond of old places! His sweet smile subdues
Their harsher aspects; warms with godlike glow,
The cold he may not conquer; 'till they lose
The aspects harsh and wild that still our steps refuse.

Love in his dying purpose, he relieves
The gloom of parting: thus, the cloud that far
Still follows on his footstep, now receives
His smile; and made all radiant like a star,
Glows in soft crimson and around his car
Curtains his couch as downward still he hies;—
Tempering the glorious light it may not mar,
The lovely drapery closes o'er his eyes,
Yet keeps his latest gift, his robe of thousand dyes.

Leap the wild billows round him as he goes,
Reddening their edges as in noonday pride;
Still struggling, as the giant girt by foes,
And failing but still fighting, eagle-eyed,
With full unfailing heart and sovereign stride,
Till the prevailing waters with wild roar,
Do homage to the glories they defied,—
Their realm of waste with fresh lights purpled o'er,
Borne far, from wave to wave, along the receding shore.

He sinks and in the heavens another star
Glides forth to her that beckon'd from the blue;
And the young moon in pearly-cinctured car,
Rides up where ocean's barriers bind the view.
Silvering the cloud she cannot quite subdue,

Soothing the strife she may not hope to sway,
Her chaster livery chides the purple's hue,
And drapes the glare that made the garish day:
Thus Love doth Glory spell to choose her milder way.

SONNETS.—TO MY FRIEND.

I.

Ambition owns no friend yet be thou mine!—
I have not much to win thee,—yet if song
Born of affection may one name prolong,
My lay shall seek to give a life to thine.
Let this requite thee for the honoring thought
That has forgiven me each capricious mood;
Dealt gently with my phrensies, school'd my blood,
And still with love my sad seclusion sought.
And when the gray sod rises o'er my breast,
Be thou the guardian of my deeds and name,
Defend me from the foes who hunt my fame,—
And, when thou show'st its purity, attest
Mine eye was ever on the sun, and bent,
Where clouds and difficult rocks make steep the great as

II.

Thou wilt remark my fate when I am dead;
Let not fools scoff above me and proclaim
That I had vainly struggled after fame,
'Till the good oil of my young life was shed,
And I became a mockery, and fell
Into the yellow leaf before my time;
A sacrifice, even in my earliest prime,
To that which thinn'd the heavens and peopled hell!

How few will understand us at the best,
How few so yield their sympathies, to know
What cares have robb'd us of our nightly rest,
How stern our trial, how complete our woe,—
And how much more our doom it was than pride,
To toil in devious ways with none who loved beside!

FLOWERS IN AUTUMN.

I.

Sweet roses! that alone beneath the sky,
The mellow sky of autumn, are, of all
Life's and remember'd nature's blandishments,
Purest and sweetest,—ye shall haply fall
Into a yellow sickliness and die!
The gentle heart that knows your luxury,
And deems ye sweetest pilgrims of the wood,
And found ye always gracious in your mood,
Bringing to Fancy its most precious food,
Such fate might well appall,—
But that your purple hues and delicate scents
Have taken fast abode in memory,
She will not lose ye, will not let ye fly!

II.

Upon each broken stalk,
Drooping in autumn's tears all desolate,
Sadly, in wild but well-accustom'd walk,
She mourns your hapless fate,
The beauty of your youth, the shortness of your date!
No charm is lost ye had for her when first
Your little petals into blossom burst!

Well she remembers, when in early spring,
The swallow won his wing,
How she hath sought in thought-imprison'd mood,
Your nun-like sweetness in your solitude,—
Glad to commune, unhooded monitors,
With such as wore a sorrow sweet like hers!

III.

And ye repaid her, well repaid, in kind;
For where, in what sweet vale
Of Yemen or of Trebizond,—
Or lands yet far beyond,
Decreed to beauty and the joys of earth,
When summer's infant warbler, from a throat
Bursting with joyous song and attic note,
Pours to the blossoming year his garrulous tale—
Could she have stray'd to find
Such beauty as ye 'herited from birth,
Such sweetness as ye lavish'd on the gale
At the warm wooing of the southern wind?

IV.

Life was a joy to ye forever, yet
Ye shudder not to die;
Your leaves are pale, but with a sweet regret,
That half persuades a faith that every sigh
Of parting hath its pleasure. Ye betray
No anguish, offer up no prayer to stay;
With feeble yearnings striving to oppose
The blight that o'er ye blows.
Sure some true instinct bids ye moralize,
And fits ye to restore to the pure skies
The sweets we know ye by.
So meekly to your doom
Ye bend to meet the summoning of death,

And, with no murmuring breath,
Yield beauty, sweet and bloom!

V.

Happy, thrice happy, perishing in sweet,
While yet the bloom is on ye and the scent
Is soft about ye, and the birds repeat,
At parting, the same songs of love and joy
That hail'd your budding from the firmament.
Death may destroy
Your being—not your beauty or your bliss—
And solace lives in this;
For thus ye know not that ye fade and fall,
Melting, as 'twere, into the sleep of all,
With a sweet prelude calm that shows like heaven!
No tender strings are riven,
Ye know not pangs—ye feel no venom'd dart
Go griding through the heart!
Ah! happy thus to part!
To go from life—its little hopes, its toys,
The idle of its promise and its noise—
Calmly as into slumbers that desire
No counsel of the awakening and the dawn,—
As bright flames in the hearth at night expire,
Nor say when they are gone!

VI.

Pale flowers, ye teach the lessons that I feel,
And, with a pictured gaze, lingering I look
Upon your parted leaves as in a book,
Which doth most pure philosophies reveal.
Your beauty hath not spoil'd ye, to deny
Your sweetness to the fond and hungering sense;

Ye bloom to glad the heedless wanderer's eye,
And ask no recompense.
Ye serve with meekness as with sweet, and go,
Even as ye came, in silence, nor complain
That they who loved ye, whom ye gladden'd so,
Would have ye still remain.

THE LAND OF THE PINE.

I.

The land of the pine,
The cedar, the vine,
Oh! may this blessed land ever be mine;
Lose not in air
Breezes that bear
Blossoms and odors, the song and the prayer.

II.

Take not from mine eye
The blue of its sky,
Bid not the soul of its loveliness die;
Still let me see
The bloom on its tree
Still bring its blossoms and blessings to me.

III.

The mountain, the vale,
Each hath a tale
Of valor that shrunk not in days of our bale—
Valor that stood
Fearless, though blood
Stream'd from his gushing veins, free, like a flood.

IV.

And oh! may the song
The burden prolong,
That told of our solace in days of our wrong;
Woman's sweet strain,
Rising o'er pain,
Cheering her warrior to combat again!

THE INUTILE PURSUIT.

Labors he then for naught, who thus pursues
What you misdeem a vision? Does he build
Vain fancies only, warm delusions, up,
And profitless chimeras;—still deceived,—
Cheating himself with hopes which haply cheat
None other than himself? Are these his toils?—
And you who work in more substantial ways,
And vex the seasons, man, all elements,
In multiplying gains—you are more wise,
And laugh to scorn the fool whose idle aim,
Like the warm painter of his own bright hues
Enamor'd, would impart to things around,
The glories that are growing in his heart
And kindling up his fancy into flame.

His are vain follies, but can yours be less,
And what are their delights? I will not ask—
But yon wild dreamer gazing on the stars
As if they were his kindred, what are his?
He gazes on them long, with musing mood
That thinks not once of earth. His spirit flies

Afar, on eagle pinions—he hath lost
The world which is around him—he hath gain'd
The world which is above him; and he feels
A mightier spirit working in his soul
Than thou hast ever dream'd of. He hath thoughts
That yield him strength and life—a treasury
In which thy gold is dross; and couldst thou give
Thy thousands in the barter, they could buy
No portion of the empire he hath won
In the fond thought he strives in. He hath felt
That life should have due play, and every nerve
Susceptible of consciousness, should do
Its separate function, ministering to the whole,
Or you have never lived, or lived in vain—
Having quick feelings, generous taste and blood,
At waste or rioting, or unemploy'd,
And damming up the system they should move.
You see no charm in those mysterious lights,
He follows evermore with eyes of thought,
And hold the worship madness which bestows
No worldly profit. Thou hast yet to learn
The things of highest profit to the heart
Are never things of trade. 'Twould be thy shame,
Star-gazing like yon dreamer, to be seen
By brother tradesmen. They would jeer thee much
With alehouse humor; and their truculent wit
Would bring the creature blood into thy cheeks,
And thou wouldst feel among thy brother men
As thou hadst done some crime, and for a while
Would shrink from the relation of thy deeds.

He thou rebukest in no kindly wise
Hath no such shame within him. In that star
He hath survey'd this hour, he joys to think

He looks on God's own handiwork and deems,
So far as he may venture on such theme,
The structure of that planetary light
Marvellous as his own, and born to shine
When he and thou, and all of us are dead!
Thence doth he draw a hope—a glorious hope—
That this poor struggle—thou, for earth's goods and gear,
And he, as thou hast thought, grappling at naught,
But fancies and a shadow—will not be,
What his quick spirit teaches him is life.
The difference 'twixt his hope and thine is great,
If thou hast never tutor'd thus thy heart,
Nor felt of these delusions. He, indeed,
Lives on them ever—is made up of them,
And glories more in that thou think'st thy shame,
Than any Greek who won a hecatomb,
Or Roman with his triumph. Nor in this
Alone, he gathers fuel for the mood
That lessons his wild spirit. In all things,
For the vain labor thou dost so deplore,
Mind hath its compensation. Ideal worlds,
Where spirits of departed myriads roam,
Are in the poet's fancy. He surveys,
In every leaf, each waving tree and bush,
Wild ocean or still brooklet, rippling down
Through twigs and bending osiers night and day,
The form of some enjoyment—some true word
From never-swerving teachers, building up
The moral of his faith into a pile,
Its apex in the heavens. Nor, in this work
Of self-perfection and self-eminence,
Lacks he for aid and fellowship. They come—
Spirits and whispering shades, that in the hush,
The stillness of deep forests, are abroad,

Obedient to his beck, whose lifted heart
May see them, and demand their services,
And make them slaves or teachers at his will.

Mock not the dream you may not understand,
Nor laugh to scorn the spirit whose pursuit
Stands not within the custom of the crowd.
The God who, to the offices of trade
Impell'd your aim, to him, perchance, assign'd
A duty—not like yours and yet not less
A duty — and he but pursues it now,
Even as assign'd him. The still flower that hides,
With speckled leaf, secure beneath yon cliff,
Gives odor to the breeze that cheers the heart
Of the consumptive—not less blest in this
Sad office, than the tree whose inner ring
Yields the small pouncet-box from which you feed
That nose you turn up, with so wise an air,
At the poor gazer on the journeying stars.

SONNETS.—THE SOUL IN IMAGINATIVE ART.

I.

Methinks each noble purpose of man's heart,
Declared by his performance, crowns his works
With a becoming spirit, which still lurks
In what he builds, nor will from thence depart,
Though time bestows it on the solitude,
The solitude on Ruin, and her gray,
In moss and lichen honoring decay,
Makes her a refuge where a nobler mood

Had rear'd a temple to diviner art,
And based its shrines on worship. In the stone
Dismember'd, sits that guardian shape alone,
Twin-being with the precious trust whose birth
Brought down a wandering genius to a throne,
And gave him thence a realm and power on earth.

II.

Thy thought but whisper'd rises up a spirit,
Wing'd, and from thence immortal. The sweet tone,
Freed by thy skill from prisoning wood or stone,
Doth thence for thine a tribute soul inherit!
When from the genius speaking in thy mind,
Thou hast evolved the godlike shrine or tower,
That moment does thy matchless art unbind
A spirit born for earth, and arm'd with power,
The fabric of thy love to watch and keep
From utter desecration. It may fall,
Thy structure,—and its gray stones topple all,—
But he who treads its portals feels how deep
A presence is upon him,—and his word
Grows hush'd, as if a shape, unseen beside him heard.

III.

At every whisper we endow with life
A being of good or evil,—who must thence,
Allegiance yield to that intelligence
Which, calling into birth decreed the strife
Which he must seek forever! The good thought
Is born a blessed angel that goes forth,
In ministry of gladness through the earth
Still teaching what is love, by love still taught!
The evil joins the numerous ranks of ill,

And, born of curses, through the endless years,
'Till Time shall be no more, and human tears
Dried up in judgment,—must his curse fulfil!
Dream'st thou of what is blessing or unblest,
Thou tak'st a God or Demon to thy breast!

THE SHADED WATER.

When that my mood is sad, and in the noise
And bustle of the crowd I feel rebuke,
I turn my footsteps from its hollow joys
And sit me down beside this little brook:
The waters have a music to mine ear
It glads me much to hear.

It is a quiet glen as you may see,
Shut in from all intrusion by the trees,
That spread their giant branches, broad and free,
The silent growth of many centuries;
And make a hallow'd time for hapless moods,
A sabbath of the woods.

Few know its quiet shelter,—none like me,
Do seek it out with such a fond desire,
Poring, in idlesse mood on flower and tree,
And listening as the voiceless leaves respire,—
When the far travelling breeze, done wandering,
Rests here his weary wing.

And all the day, with fancies ever new,
And sweet companions from their boundless store,

Of merry elves bespangled all with dew,
  Fantastic creatures of the old time lore,—
Watching their wild but unobtrusive play,
I fling the hours away.

A gracious couch,—the root of an old oak,
  Whose branches yield it moss and canopy,—
Is mine—and so it be from woodman's stroke
  Secure, shall never be resign'd by me;
It hangs above the stream that idly plies,
Heedless of any eyes.

There, with eye sometimes shut but upward bent,
  Sweetly I muse through many a quiet hour,
While every sense on earnest mission sent,
  Returns, thought-laden, back with bloom and flower
Pursuing, though rebuked by those who moil,
A profitable toil.

And still the waters trickling at my feet,
  Wind on their way with gentlest melody,
Yielding sweet music which the leaves repeat,
  Above them, to the gay breeze gliding by,—
Yet not so rudely as to send one sound
Through the thick copse around.

Sometimes a brighter cloud than all the rest
  Hangs o'er the archway opening through the trees,
Breaking the spell that, like a slumber press'd
  On my worn spirit its sweet luxuries,—
And, with awaken'd vision upward bent,
I watch the firmament.

How like—its sure and undisturb'd retreat,
  Life's sanctuary at last, secure from storm—

To the pure waters trickling at my feet,
The bending trees that overshade my form;
So far as sweetest things of earth may seem
Like those of which we dream.

Such, to my mind, is the philosophy
The young bird teaches, who, with sudden flight,
Sails far into the blue that spreads on high,
Until I lose him from my straining sight,—
With a most lofty discontent to fly,
Upward, from earth to sky.

AT A CHILD'S GRAVE.

Sleep, dear one, in thy lowly bed,—
We strew thy grave with flowers,
Yet know that happier dawns shall shed
Such brightness round thy infant head,
As never gladden'd ours!

Not long thy sleep!—a summer night,
And then the eternal day,
All joy;—for sin hath brought no blight
To check thy free and happy flight
To bowers where all is gay.

Gay in the sinless thought, and dear
With pure delights, that grow
Still, in the eternal sunshine there,
To music, such as mortal sphere
May dream, but never know!

Already, on thy infant face,
The soft repose would seem
To shadow forth the dawning grace
Of an ethereal hope and place,
Heaven's opening gates and gleam.

Ah! happier thus, and vain the tears
That vex thy sweet repose;
Why should thy hopes awake our fears,
Thy growing glories prompt our cares,
Thy raptures move our woes?

Thou'st 'scaped the cell—hast broke the chain,
Already wear'st thy wings;
Wilt never feel the grief again,
Wilt never know the guilt, the pain,
That vex all mortal things!

Already, at heaven's gate, with songs—
Thy angel gift at birth—
Proclaim'st to glad and greeting throngs,
Thy freedom from the woes and wrongs
That gloom'd thy home on earth!

That gloom it still to guardian eyes,—
That move their tears,—that wrest
From the strong bosom of man the sighs,
And wring with woe the soul that lies
Deep down in woman's breast.

Yet why the woe? For thee? And thou,
Afar and joyous!—Shame!—
Wouldst bring thee back, thus heavenward now,
To pangs of heart, to clouds of brow,
Long sorrows, strifes and blame!

Why heart so sad? fond eyes why weep?
Cease mourners! Would ye wake
This little dreamer from the sleep,
That seems so beautiful and deep,
His weary eyelids take?

REMINISCENCE.

Whose is the heart that never beat,
With all it fancied yet of joy,
Returning to that blest retreat
Where he so fondly roved a boy;
When, after years of wandering grief,
Pursuing phantoms sweet but vain,
His wearied spirit seeks relief
In dear but homely haunts again?
When the old roof-tree fresh appears,
The lowly cottage-thatch and dome,
Which shelter'd well his boyish years,
And taught the virtues sweet of home.
The well-known plain, the ancient grove,
In all unchanged, as when he sped,
By Fate or Fancy taught to rove,
To worlds that gave him naught instead!

Ah! sicklied in the wasting chase,
By idlest hopes misled no more,
How fondly doth his thought retrace
The scenes that fill'd his heart before!
Here still the oak whose spreading arms
Gave shelter from the noonday heat;—
Here still the maid whose childish charms

His childish fancy felt were sweet;
Here still the mead whose ample grounds
Gave scope to boyhood's eager flight;
And there the "old-field school," whose sounds
Spoke less for study than delight.

How natural do they all appear,
By time untouch'd, by age unbent;
The maiden still more bright and fair,
More wise and yet as innocent;
The oak scarce lustier in its might,
With bearded moss well-known of old,
And groves that gladden green in sight,
With song-bird gay and squirrel bold!

How swift the backward glance which runs
O'er thousand memories still as new
As if, unchanged by thousand suns,
The heart were fresh and changeless too!
What loves, what strifes, what hopes and fears
Grow thick about the laboring thought,
Until, unconscious of its tears,
The eye no longer sees the sought.
Memory, triumphant o'er the past,
Restores each dear possession gone;
And the world's orphan, long outcast,
Deems each lost treasure still his own!
Oh! stay the dream! Let Memory sway,
Nor all too soon the truth unfold,—
The cottage roof-tree in decay,
The sire, the friend, the maiden cold!

EVENING BY THE SEA-SHORE.

How, with a spell of sweetness all her own,
The dew-eyed evening hallows the broad land!
She rises like a sovereign to her throne;
Earth sleeps; the waters murmur on the strand;
A breathing calm descending from the skies,
Wraps her wide realm in happiest harmonies.

There is no ruder breath than stirs the flowers,
Winning their proffer'd odor;—earth and air,
The sea,—even down amid the coralline bowers,
Seen through the perilous waters,—all is fair;
God's spirit, like a spell-word sent abroad,
Subdues earth's strife, makes sweet each gift of God!

The little wavelet breaking on the shore,
Brings with it kindly mission from the deep:
Its strifes at rest, its angry terrors o'er,
It feels the calm of brightness o'er it creep;
Shares in the kindred blessing of the skies,
And hallow'd like the land, in holiest beauty lies.

The winds that travell'd on its breast all night,
And rock'd their own great cradle till they slept,
Have caught up sweetest odors in their flight,
From the soft Haytien gardens;—they have swept
Fruit forests, where the generous tribute grows
Unheeded, and in vain its wealth on earth bestows.

What tidings doth such mournful truth convey
Of savage and regardless nature there!
Still the wild man, untutor'd to obey,
Makes foul the realm that Heaven hath made most fair:

The heart that is not gentle hath no eyes
For beauty, and esteems no loving harmonies.

His mood is in the dark; he loves the night
Even in its stormier aspects;—skies, to him,
Which God hath robed in sweet, give no delight;
The moon herself might just as well be dim;
Breezes of bliss that sweep the placid sea,
Sing in his ears no song of sweet humanity.

Ah! dear their several voices in my breast,
Teaching the moral loving faith makes strong;
There is a hope that will not be repress'd,—
The strifes of earth shall cease and human wrong
Be but a theme for fiction—of a race
That lived in barbarous times, nor had the means of grace.

I feel it in the picture round me spread;
Earth link'd with heaven; old ocean won to calm,
And glassy smooth, as for an angel's tread;
Winds musical and zephyrs full of balm;
And the wild passions of my soul, they rest:—
There is not now a wrong within my breast.

I do forgive mine ancient enemy;—
I would that he were nigh to hear my prayer;
God's light be shining now upon his eye,
God's blessed voice, in mercy, reach his ear:
Hath he a child—may it be blest as she,
The one whom Heaven hath spared, of all my flock, to me.

These winds have blessings in them; they have come
From happiest realms where sorrow never dwells;
They rouse the languid nature to new bloom,
The thought expands, the soul in triumph swells;

Ah! for the power this feeling to impart,
To tell these raptures rising in my heart!

The affections that have slumber'd in the strife,
Sweet charities that human strifes subdue,
And virtues, that man seldom keeps through life,
Return once more, to prove his nature true:
Still may the soul its fondest hope maintain,
When such as these come back to strengthen love again.

Oh! precious ministry of Eve, whose peace
Thus still commends the harmonies that soothe;
Still with thy stars in the great vault increase,
Still with thy breezes freshen hope with youth;
Breathe calm upon the hearts that strive with hate,
And smile on homes by wrong made desolate.

CONGAREE BOAT-HORN BY MOONLIGHT.

I.

As a bird leaving some desolate shore,
Slowly unclosing his vans for the flight,
Then upward cleaving the sky that before,
Softly reposing, lay sweet in the night;
Thus gently soaring from Congaree's stream,
Swelling and spreading through forest and bay,
A pinion exploring in search of a beam,
Soothing and shedding a bliss on its way!

II.

Luscious in sadness and lovely in light,
Melting while swelling and failing when won,

Tears of a gladness that, born of a flight,
Weeps the rebelling that leaves her undone!
Oh! that a billow thus swelling and fair,
Should ever subsiding steal off from the bright;
Music its pillow and rapture so rare,
Ever more gliding through dreams of its night.

III.

Wings that, ascending, still bear me away,
Lose me not, falling from rapture's own sphere;
With my thought blending its happiness sway,
As a voice calling through measureless air;
Still, with these daughters of Congaree's stream,
Born of thee only in moonlight and song,—
Still o'er these waters ascend with a gleam,
'Till with the lonely thou leavest a throng.

SONNETS.—INVOLUNTARY STRUGGLE.

I.

Not in the rashness of warm confidence,
Too vainly, self-assured that I was strong,
To struggle for and reach that eminence,
Around whose rugged steeps such terrors throng;
Did I resolve upon the perilous toil
Which calls for man's best strength and hardihood,
Ere he may win the height and take the spoil;—
But that a spirit stronger than my mood,
Stood ever by and drave me to the task!—
Oh! not in vain presumption did I choose

The barren honors of the unfruitful Nine,
Sure that no favor from them did I ask;
Small resolution did it need of mine,
To bind me to the service of the Muse!

II.

Even as the boy whom the stern prophet sire
Devotes, in some deep forest, with a vow—
So, with no thought of mine, and no desire,
Was I constrain'd to seek and sworn to bow
At altars, whose strange gods did never tire
Of service, but commanded night and day!
I knew no sports of comrades,—when in play
My young companions shouted, I was sad;
Fill'd with strange yearnings,—summon'd still away
To that lone worship—watchful, yet not glad!
Shall it be deem'd a voluntary mood
That leads the boy from boyhood,—sports he loves,—
The merry games of comrades,—still to brood,
While others laugh, in melancholy groves?

TO THE MOCK-BIRD,

SINGING GAYLY IN MY ROOF-TREES THE NIGHT AFTER THE DEATH OF ONE OF MY CHILDREN.

The grief that is at riot in my heart
Would harshly chide to silence thy sweet song,
Vain minstrel, that beside my window sing'st,
Couch'd in thy guarded nest, of all its joys,—
Its peace secure from spoiler—its delights,
That spring from mutual souls, with mutual wings,
That know one course for flight, and seek no more;

Thus linking, through the long, long summer day,
Their happy, idle songs.
Thy rapture brings
My grief. Thou mock'st me, though thou little know'st,
With hopes I cannot feel, and loves that now
Shall make me blest no more. Go, make thy nest
In gardens, where the thoughtless ear of joy
May list thee,—and the idle lips of youth
Give thee meet welcome, in a strain as loud,
Though not so sweet as thine. Beneath my tree
Sits Sorrow. At her feet her treasure lies—
Her young! Go, tremble in thy peaceful nest,
And know, no innocence is so secure
That Death presumes not. Happiest songs like thine,
Caroll'd above that young bird at its birth;
And oh! what joyful dreams were in the hearts
Of the fond pair that watch'd it. Idlest dreams,
Of sweetest summer days, when all their toil
Should be to guide its little wings in flight,
And hearken to its callow song of love,
That now can never rise. Leave this lone tree!—
Sing not those wild and vagrant notes that make
The sad heart loathe thy accents. Other groves
Will give thee shelter, where no spoiler comes,
Or latest comes. Grief claims this home for hers,
For solitude and mourning. Here she craves
More fit companionship with ghostly thoughts;
Shadows that might be smiles, but for the cloud
About them; and the tenderest loves that grew
To sorrows, in the morning of their day,
And so were hallow'd. 'Tis no home for thee!—
When thou hast lost thy brood—when the hawk strikes
Thy fledgling, come thou back and take thy rest,
As thou hast done of old, within thy tree;

And sing, if sing thou canst. I will not chide,
For then, methinks, thy strain will, like mine own,
Tell of thy treasure—of its loveliness,
Bright, dazzling eyes, and of its little chirp,
All sweetness, but which never swell'd to song.

SONNETS.—DESPONDENCY AND SELF-REPROACH.

I.

Oh friend, but thou art come to see me die!
I parted from thee as I think in tears,
Alas! in tears that we should meet again:
Yet have they been my proper property,
And not for me to boast their needful pain,
Since 'twas my wilful, sad perversity,
That made them mine in my unreasoning years!
Yet if thou com'st for solace, give me thine,
For sympathy with sorrow still endears;
Grief seeks her happiest medicine in grief,
And, doom'd no more in silence to repine,
Finds in the kindred fortune best relief!
Ah! weeping thus, in such sweet company,
Methinks this sorrow is not wholly mine!

II.

Hadst thou come sooner! But 'tis not too late
To soothe, though late to save! Thou canst not know
The profligate waste of hope, the scorn of fate
Which brings me now to this unmeasured woe!
The bitter birthright of unreckoning will,
The much too perfect freedom of my youth—

Oh privilege! to youth so perilous still,
Given by a fate as void of love as truth!
To these I owe this sorrow, and to these
The ruin that awaits my little bark,
Driven with too docile breezes on the seas
Till on the rocks, when skies grew sudden dark,
Foundering, she darted high, to sink as low
As hate might joy to see, as guilt and grief may go.

III.

Ah! *thou* didst use to steer her chartfully,
But when we parted, wilful on the deep,
I launch'd, too bold the modest shore to keep,
Considering not the storm-conceiving sky,
The wind's caprice; that still a music gave,
As for an infant's slumber; nor the rocks,
That, fraudulent lurking, hush'd their wonted roar,
And buried their white heads along the shore,
Till, in their gripe, their keel-destroying shocks
Wreck'd me forever! Thou art late to save;
But thou wilt raise a beacon on the steep,
That other wrecks will happen here no more;
And if thou build it from this wreck of mine,
Even though it shame my grave, 'twill honor thine.

STANZAS IN APRIL.

A few light drifts of fleecy snow,
And all the skies are bright again,
While gusts of March subdued, now blow
In murmurs only o'er the plain;

They speak of milder guests at hand,
And gentler powers that take the sway,
Sweet nymphs of Spring, a joyous band,
That dance around the maiden May!

Ah! precious flowers, that to the heart
Appeal with promise long to cheer;
Beneath my feet I see ye start,
In token of the awakening year;
Even while the snow-drift sweeps the plain,
Your leaves of blue are gleaming low,
Above the very spot again,
Which made your graves a year ago.

Ye had your mission for a while,
And served as teachers sweet of love,
As infant souls appear to smile,
Then flee, to tempt our souls above;
A thousand seasons hence, when I
Within a grave like yours recline,
My children shall your blossoms spy,
And muse with grateful thoughts like mine.

A LAST PRAYER.

I.

Sweet be the laughing skies around,
And sunny flowers be seen,
And let a carpet strew the ground,
Of summer's richest green—
Thus, when the weary strife is o'er,
Should still our parting be;

I would not have one heart deplore
When it remembers me.

II.

Lay me in pleasant earth's embrace
When all things smile around,
When eyes of gentleness may trace
Sweet blossoms on the ground—
When merriest birds delight to sing,
And chirping insects swell
A gracious note of early spring,
O'er the spot wherein I dwell.

III.

Not that, when slumbering in its shade,
My 'wilder'd soul may dream
That I shall hear one cricket's chirp,
Or wandering mock-bird's scream;
But, at a time when all are glad,
If the dead may solaced be,
I would be sure if aught was sad,
It was not so through me.

IV.

I would not have a stone to mark
The place of my repose,
Nor, chronicled in clumsy verse,
The story of my woes—
My virtues, such as are my own,
In some true heart will bloom—
My vices, when I'm dead and gone,
Should moulder in my tomb.

V.

There let the summer's leaflets blow,
And blossom 'neath the morn,
And primrose buds and daisies grow,
The moment spring is born—
And let the hours, a sweet serene,
Around my dwelling throng—
While birds and bees with vocal hum,
Make merry all with song.

VI.

And if in life there be one heart
That song or speech of mine,
Counsell'd by erring sympathies,
Hath tutor'd to repine—
Let not that gentle heart upbraid,
With eye or aspect dim,
The father of the wayward verse
When it remembers him.

VII.

Or, if the latest prayer be vain,
And some fond heart shall weep,
And pour above his grave a strain
Of memories, sad and deep;
Let the tear fall in loneliness,
I would not crowds should see
The dear but silent intercourse
Such heart shall hold with me.

ZEPHYRS, THAT WAIT ON MY LADY.

A SOUTHERN AREYTO.

I.

Zephyrs, that wait on my lady,
Plumes, that still soothe her to rest,
My spirit grows jealous already,
Lest in blessing ye too should be blest;
Yet lift ye the curls of her tresses,
And bend to her lips at each sigh,
And fold her in fondest caresses,
That these may be mine when ye fly;—
Sweet zephyrs,
These bring me whenever ye fly!

II.

I know why ye tend on the showers,
I know why ye glide to the deep,
And watch by the side of the flowers
To rifle their lips as they sleep;
Their freshness and odor ye carry
To woo the fair maiden to rest,
And then at her lattice ye tarry,
Like blessings to rob from her breast:
Sly zephyrs!
Would, like ye, I could also be blest!

SUMMER-NIGHT WIND.

How soothingly, to close the sultry day,
Comes the sweet breeze from off the murmuring waves,
That break away in music!—and I feel
As a new spirit were within my veins
And a new life in nature. I awake
From the deep weight of weariness that fell,
Pall-like, upon my spirit as my frame,
Making the sense of helplessness a pain,
Even to the soul;—a fresher pulse of life
Throbs quickly through each vein and artery,
And a new wing, a livelier nerve and strength,
Kindle the languid spirit into play.

Oh! generous nature, this is then thy boon,
These airs that come with evening—these sweet spells
That glide into the bosom with the embrace,
Whose very touch is life, and on the frame,
O'erborne and humbled by the oppressive weight
Of this fierce August atmosphere, bestow'st
A sense as precious as the boon that takes
The captive from his dungeon, and provides
The wings for his departure to free realms
Where no oppression harbors. Oh! I lift
My brow, as with a consciousness of power
I had not known before. I drink a joy
Most like a rapture, from each gushing air
That rustles and ruffles over the green shrub
And the gay orange, late so motionless,
That half obscure my window. Precious airs,
Full of delicious affluence, flow on

With wings that beat the drowsy atmosphere,
Until, in emulous murmur like your own,
It mates with ye in anthem, such as thrills
The Atlantic, till each billow takes a voice,
And echoes the deep chant.
Ye come! I feel
Your wings in playful office all about me,
Lifting the moisten'd hair upon my brows,
As if some spirit fann'd me. Is it not
A spirit, thus wrought from subtlest elements,
Child of the storm, perchance of ocean born,
But with commission sweet to check its sire
And soothe his rage to fondness? Thou persuad'st
His passions to repose beside the sea,
And chid'st his billows. With a sportive play
Thou steal'st the freshening vigor from his waves,
And bear'st it to the fainting on the waste
Where other wings are fire, and nature droops
Amidst her richest treasures.
Ah! how sweet
That fervent gush that shook apart the boughs,
And made the orange quiver beneath the eaves,
Even to its odorous roots.
Had I the voice
To mingle with that mighty chant, and grow
With its caprices flexible—now borne
A torrent through the void, and now a sigh,
Drooping with folded wing beside the couch,
As glad but gentle in the duteous office,
That soothes even while it stirs! Again the strain
Swelling in gradual volume, till the burst
Mocks the cathedral anthem, and rolls on,
Precursor of new billows of proud song
That grow to mountains on the beaten beach,

Suddenly to subside in the great deeps
That sent them first abroad. How lowlily
The murmurs waken now, and now the voice
Sinks audibly, with seeming consciousness :—
As one, a maid, that falters in her sports,
Steals back with sweet timidity of step,
As fearing that, in very guilelessness,
Her play hath been too wild ; and now, as bold,
By truer thought, that forward glides again,
Renewing dance and song, surpassing still,
With each fresh effort, the repeated grace.
How wild that sudden gust—how sweet that breath
That seem'd to borrow music from the groves
Of Paphos, kindling to an amorous mood
The sense so lately dull ! Alas ! it shrinks !
The breeze's virtue is not constancy !—
What gay caprice !—but hence its secret fervor,
The charm that piques to renovate the heart,
And cools to fan its fires. It shrinks away
To gather up new strength. Subdued and awed,
It wantons forth at moments—a soft breath,
That whispers at the lattice—then creeps in
As doubtful of permission :—to be seen
Swelling the shrinking drapery of the couch,
Then melting into silence. Now, again,
It comes, and with a perfume in its breath,
Caught up from spicy gardens. The fair maid
Whose roses thus yield tribute to the march
Of that wild rover, guesses not the thief,
Whose fierce embrace thus robs them of their youth,
And virgin treasure—leaving them at morn
To weep that eager, fond soliciting,
They knew not to resist. Yet I rejoice
That they are thus despoil'd. 'Twere an ill wind

That brought to none its treasure. Is it not
A loving providence that thus provides
With blessing such as this, the unfavor'd one
Who else had never known it? In my cot,
Who sees the precious flowers of foreign growth,
From whose unfolding bosoms, this wild thief
Drinks the aroma to bestow on me?
My lordly neighbor's palace frowns me down,
His walls shut out my footsteps—his great gates
Open not to bid me enter, and mine eyes
Catch but faint glimpses of that prisoner realm,
His floral Harem, where his flowers but fade,
Having no proper worshipper. Yet in vain
His stone precautions and his iron gates,
Against my Ariel, my tricksy spirit,
That comes to me again with sweets so laden
As half to check his flight.

My precious breeze,
Misfortune well may love thee. Thou hast fled
The gayest regions. The high palaces,
Fair groves and gardens of nice excellence,—
The pride of power—the pageantry and pomp
That gild ambition and conceal its cares,—
Could not detain thee! Thou hast fled them all,
And, like an angel, still on blessing bent,
Hast come to cheer the lonely. It is meet
Thy welcome should be lavish like thyself.
Thou art no flatterer, and thou shouldst not creep
Through a close lattice with but half thy train,
When I would gather all of thee, and wrap
Thy draperies about me, as a robe
Dear as the first dews of the embracing spring
To the young buds of nature.

Sweet, oh! sweet,

Thy play about my brows. Thy whispers tell
Of songs in tree-tops when the forest pines
Give shelter, 'neath their ample and green boughs
In dark and mighty colonnades, to airs
That had no refuge else. They whisper me
A music such as glads the o'erladen heart,
Subdued, yet sleepless, fever'd with the heat
Of the long day in summer. Dear the dream
Thy service brings me. The still vexing care
Of body sleepless, that still troubles mind,
And makes one long commotion in the brain,
Grows soothed beneath thy ministry; and now,
Slumbers so coy, and woo'd so long in vain,
Are wrapping me at last. I will lie down
Beneath my window. There shall be no bar
To thy free entrance. Thou wilt linger here,
And with thy wings above my wearied brow,
Will put aside the masses of my hair
With a mysterious kindness—'till my sleep
Shall seem to me, in dreams which thou wilt shape,
Hallow'd by Love's officious tenderness,
And watch'd by one, the heart's ideal beauty,
Whose smile shall be a treasure like thine own,
Though never, in the experience of the day,
It finds the mortal match for my desire.

SONNETS.—PROGRESS IN DENIAL.

I.

"Yet, onward still!" the spirit cries within,
'Tis I that must repay thee. Mortal fame,
If won, is but at best the hollow din,
The vulgar freedom with a mighty name;
Seek not this music—ask not this acclaim,
But in the strife find succor;—for the toil
Pursued for such false barter ends in shame,
As certainly as that which seeks but spoil!
Best recompense he finds, who, to his task
Brings a proud, patient spirit that will wait,
Nor for the guerdon stoop, nor vainly ask
Of fate or fortune,—but with right good-will,
Go, working on, and uncomplaining still,
Assured of fit reward or soon or late!

II.

Thousands must perish in this hopeless strife,
And other thousands, withering as they stand,
Grow old in the long conflict waged for life!—
The conflict not for homes, or gold, or land,
But the rare privilege of rule,—command
Over the meaner spirits that surround—
And worship while they mock—that starry band,
They call ambitious! Rivalry and Blame
Attend their footsteps,—envy, and the host
Of reptile passions that delight to wound
The spirits whom their hatred honor's most,—
And worse, Ingratitude!—that still from fame
Plucks its best laurel, as if loth to know
How much it owes and cannot help but owe.

BALLAD.

Give me thy song of sorrow;
  Its 'plainings touch the heart,
First born of melancholy,
  And not of mortal art:
It strengthens though it saddens,
  A love-commission'd thing;
Oh! sorrow's song is holy,
  And thus, I pray thee, sing!

Sing while the shadows deepen
  Upon yon hill whose brow
Wears still the flickering sunlight,
  But whence 'tis flitting now;
Sing of the fading beauty,
  Sing of the coming night,
And as our eyes grow tearful,
  Methinks they must grow bright.

Let him who has not sorrow'd
  With loss of things most dear,
Exult in music's triumph,
  And joy in Hope's career;
But he who weeps the parting
  That made each blessing brief,
Will seek from music only
  The song that wakens grief.

IMMORTALITY.

I.

Beside me, in a dream of the deep night,
Unsummon'd, but in loveliness array'd,
Stood a warm, blue-eyed maid;
And the night fled before her, and the bloom
Of her eternal beauty from my sight
Dispell'd the midnight gloom.

II.

She stood beside me, and her white hand fell,
A touch of life and light upon my brow,—
That straightway felt the freshening waters flow,
As from a heart whose tides had sudden might
In the bright presence of some holy spell,—
Whose smile at once brought strength with new delight.

III.

And in her voice a winningness prevail'd,—
A music born of waters that go free
Through forests gladden'd in their greenery,
And lapsing through their leaves, as in a play
Of song and bird, by flower and beam regaled,
Whose pastimes are not ended with the day.

IV.

Hers was a voice of wings;—the linnet's note,
The lark's clear morning song of upper skies,
The dove's sweet plaint of tenderness and sighs;—
And the unparallel'd life within her own,
Made these a happier music than they brought
Unchorus'd, when they caroll'd forth alone!

V.

Her eye was its own music,—its own flight,—
As if, commercing ever with the spheres,
It strove for harmonies to mate with theirs,
And wings to pass from star to star at will;—
To shun the province yielded up to night,
For realms of brightness still!

VI.

The living speech upon her lips, in fire
Rose swelling like a soul;—while in her eye
The truth that blossoms with divinity,
Ray'd out with golden brightness, and awoke
Within my heart a pulse of new desire,
That burst each ancient yoke.

VII.

Then, in my rapture, I had lain my head
Upon the soft swell of that happy round,
That rose up like a white celestial mound,—
As saying,—"bring your gifts to this one shrine;"
But that her brow's clear will soon banished
The fond resolve from mine!

VIII.

I did not quail or tremble at her glance,
For still it seem'd as she were there to bring
New loves to crown my hope, a newer wing,
And open better provinces of life;—
Within her smile I saw deliverance,
And broad new realms for strife.

IX.

Yet broken was my speech, and forth I stood
Despairing, though immersed in certain bliss,
Lest I should lose, in my soul's feebleness,
The embrace that now seem'd needful to content;
And tears were all that the impetuous blood
Vouchsafed, of all it meant!

X.

Then sweeter grew the smile upon her face,
As conscious of my suffering and my truth,
Her heart for mine was sudden smit with ruth;
And she made answer, not with human word,—
But in her smile, and the intelligent grace
Of motion, was she heard.

XI.

"Thy wish is thy performance," said she then;—
"And thou wilt take me to thy arms anon
When thou hast put thy loftier nature on,
And made me the sole passion in thy heart;
But not for thee, when we shall meet again,
To be what now thou art!

XII.

"And 'tis for thy soliciting to say,
Whether my form will show to thee as now;—
It may be thou wilt shrink to see the brow,
Which, though in loveliness it now appears,
May so affront thee, thou wilt turn away
In terror and in tears!

XIII.

"If that the passion thou hast felt for me
Live in thy future memory, thou wilt raise
Thy altar and thy anthem in my praise;
And I will light thy fires and wing thy strain;—
But if I lose thee from my love, for thee
My presence must be pain.

XIV.

"'Tis written, we shall meet;—'tis written more,
Thou shalt be mine, I thine; and we must go
Forever link'd through ages that still flow
From founts of time eternal, to no end,
Save one of toil, which we may both deplore,
Or covet, as thy single wishes tend.

XV.

"Our future is performance! Worlds are placed
Around us for possession; and, in these
We make our separate mansions as we please,
And choose the separate task that each fulfil;
In these, or happy and blest,—or low debased,—
Must wait upon thy will.

XVI.

"And thus, in a brief vision of the night,
I show thee what I am, that thou mayst see
How great the blessings that still wait on thee,
Even at thy pleasure:—Could I show thee more,
Then should thy wonder grow with thy delight,
At what is in my store.

XVII.

"I come not with denial, though I now
Deny thee my embrace;—thy head shall lie
Upon this bosom—on thy doubtful eye
This form shall rise at last, whate'er thou beest;
For thee to say, how fair shall be the brow,
How bright the eye, which, in that day thou seest.

XVIII.

"Oh! 'tis to all my charms that I entreat
Thy coming;—thou shalt have my crown and wings;
For thee, the bird that late and early sings,
When hope is at the entrance, shall appear;
And we will glide, with pinions at our feet,
To tasks by Love made dear!

XIX.

"Come to me then, beloved one, with thy heart
Made pure in my remembrance—with thy thought
By hope of triumph in mine forever taught
To seek the unnamed condition of delight;—
So shall I meet thee, fond as now thou art,
Thou me, as now I seem unto thy sight!"

XX.

Rapture, oh rapture!—wherefore wert thou born
So soon to perish?—thou, a part of death,
Art lost to being with thy first sweet breath,
And lifelong then we mourn thee, with an eye,
Turn'd outwards, inwards—with the look forlorn—
Too happy, if it seeks for thee on high.

EVENING AT SEA.

Day sinks in rosy vestments that, afar
Spread o'er the billows, as with guardian office,
To shelter his decline. Gorgeous in gold
And purple, fall the curtains of the west,
In the same gracious duty;—his repose
Screening from vulgar gaze of those who late
Had flourish'd in his favor. Now they fleet,
Those clouds of glorious garniture and shade,
Changing their apt varieties of form,
No less than hue and loveliness, to lines
That melt even while they linger, in the embrace
Of the fast-rising Night; who, like a mother,
Takes all within her fold. A little while,
And darkness sways the ocean, whose great waves
Grow sullen as they murmur through the gloom,
Resentful of its shadows.—But anon,
Comes forth the maiden Moon,—her sickle bent
For service in these fields; a glorious blade,
Of silver, that subdues them at a stroke,
Leaving the keen reflection of its edge
On every heaving hillock as she goes!
How rare the hush that follows! Not a wave
Lifts its rebellious head; but, lawn'd in light,
Subdues itself most willing to the embrace
Of that perfecting beauty which makes all
Her tribute objects precious, though obscure!
How sudden sinks the wind, that, but a while,
Took a capricious play upon its vans,
And shook our streamers out! The heavenly things

Seem brooding o'er our path ; the great abyss
Of deep and sky, flush'd with intelligent forms,
The herds of eyes, the numerous flocking stars,
Gazing in wonder on the serene march.

WHERE BY DARRO'S EVENING WATERS.

I.

Where by Darro's evening waters
Hang the weeping willows low,
There they sat, the twilight's daughters,
Ever beautiful with woe :—
Murmuring songs of fitful sorrow,—
Sorrow mingled with such sweetness,
That it would not know completeness
But for softening tears that borrow
From the yielding heart compliance ;—
And such touching, fond reliance
On the rapture of the morrow,—
That the hearer weeps for pleasure,
As the music o'er him creeps,
And he finds increasing measure,
In his pleasure, that he weeps !

II.

Sleeps he then beside the waters,
By that twilight song oppress'd ;
Softly gliding then, the daughters
Steal beside his rest ;—
Three young maids of touching sweetness,

Born of dew, and light, and air,
Mourning still the life of fleetness,
That belongs to birth so rare!—
Yet, so human still their 'plaining,
In his heart strange pangs arise,
And a new life they are gaining,
From the drops that fill his eyes.
Reason good for sorrow's power,
In that sad and dreaming hour—
Far beyond their hapless plight,
Is his own and kindred birth;—
Born of air, and dew, and light,
He is also born of earth!

SOUL-FLIGHT.

I.

What checks the eagle's wing—what dims his eye,
Turn'd upward to the sky?
Doth the cloud cumber the ascending flight
Of that which is all light?
Fruitless, indeed, were such a frail defence
Against intelligence;
And all in vain the chains of earth would bind
The disembodied mind!

II.

Glorious and unrestrainéd on its way,
It seeks the endless day;
It drinks more deeply of the intenser air,
That streams with being there;

A thing of sense and sight, it early learns,
And sees, adores, and burns;
Claiming, with every breath from out the sky,
Its own divinity.

III.

From world to world, from gathering star to star,
Its flight is fast and far;
As through an ordeal, it prepares in each
Some higher form to reach;
From the small orb that lights the outer gate
Of that all-nameless state,
To that which burns before the eternal throne,
Fearless it hurries on.

IV.

Dread mystery, that to the mortal sight,
Seems all one shapeless night,—
Wild with unbidden clouds, that flickering haste
Still o'er a pathless waste,
Without one intellectual planet's ray
To yield a partial day;
Will death reveal the truth to sons of men?—
Shall we explore you then?

V.

I would not be the creature of the clay,
Mouldering with time away,
Nor hold, for my soul's hope, the awful thought
That death is all, life naught!—
That all this soaring mind, this high desire
Still upward to aspire,
Is but the yearning of some painted thing
That would not lose its wing.

THE CHILD-ANGEL.

It is our blessing that her lot was fair—
The precious birthright of the dew and air,
The green and shade of woods, the song of birds,
And dreams too bright for words—
All that makes moonlight for the innocent heart,
And love, that, in its bud, is still its crowning part.

The sadness of the spring-time in the shade
Of dusk—the shadows of the night array'd,
By stars in the great forests, as they look,
Glistening, as from a brook;
And stillness in the gloom, that seems a sound,
Breathed up, unconscious, out from nature's great profound.

Fancies, that go beside us when we glide,
Still seeking no companion—prompt to guide
Even where we would not, to the saddest grove,
Where one still weeps for love,—
Still nursing ever a most sweet distress,
That through our very sorrow seems to bless;—

These, since the child's departure, still declare
Her precious birthright in the dew and air—
And I, that do inherit them from her,
Do feel them minister,
As with new voices never felt before,
To love that in my heart still groweth more and more.

CAPE HATTERAS.

"Ah! by these breezes—(how unlike the airs
That clipp'd us when we sought our berths last night!)—
These languid breezes, and the odorous breath
That sweeps to us from forests of green pines,
I know that we have pass'd the stormy Cape!"

Exclaiming thus, when, waking at the dawn,
I hurried from the cabin to the deck,
And there—his wrath subdued, his winds at rest—
Lay the fierce god of cloudy Hatteras,
At length upon the deep. Our vessel ran
Beside him fearless, and the eyes that oft
Had trembled at the story of his storms
Look'd on him without dread. Yet, in his sleep,
The sun down blazing on his old gray head,
There was a moody murmur of his waves
That spake of ruthless powers, and bade us fly
To our far homes, with wings of moving fear
Not less than hope. We might not loiter long,
Like thoughtless birds, improvident of home,
And wandering, by the sunshine still seduced,
O'er treacherous billows. No half despot he,
To spare in mercy in his wrathful hour.
A thousand miles along his sandy couch
The shores shall feel his wakening, and his lash
Resound in thunder. Brooding by the sea
He lurks in waiting for the passing bark,
And every year hath its own chronicle
Of his exactions—of the fearful tribute

He takes from all alike. Cruel the tale
Of friends that here pay forfeit with their lives
For the o'erweening faith that trusts his calms;—
Whilst the beloved ones, watching by the port,
Look vainly for their coming. Sad the tale
Of the poor maiden, shrieking in despair,
Grasp'd in his rude embrace, and borne away
To unreturning caverns of the deep,—
Which, with an aspect obdurate, behold
The precious lamp of life put sudden out
Even its kindling glow. Yet are there hours
When the true spirit of love defies his rage;
And, in one night of terror and of storm,
When his wild seas were wildest—and the ship
Strove, sinking 'neath them,—and all living souls
Were all distraught—all hopeless, purposeless,
Struggling against each other as with death—
Blind, knowing not the kinsman or the friend,—
Calling on God, with but a half a prayer,—
And him forgettingly;—one voice, o'er all,
Was heard amid the clamor and the storm,
Firm, crying for the woman who had lain,
Until that fearful hour, upon his breast,
And now was sunder'd from him by the night,
Unconsciously:—"Oh! where art thou, my wife!"
That loving cry was heard above the storm;—
The winds grew moment still;—the tumbling waves
Lifted their heads as in a grim surprise,
And paused in their huge gambols! Ah! too soon
To rush to their renewal. The fond cry
Was stifled ere it rose into the heavens,
But not before the wife made answer sweet,
That, through the midnight blackness, seem'd a voice

To waken life in death ;—" I come to thee,
Where art thou, dearest husband ? Let me come !"*

She sprang to join him, and the sullen seas
Closed over them forever. 'Tis my prayer
That, ere he perish'd, she had wound her arms
About him, and had press'd her lip to his :—
And it were seemly, if, beneath the waves,
They sleep encircled in the same embrace ;—
Her cheek upon his bosom, and his arms
Wrapt round her in the holy grasp of love ;
Secure from storm, and, best assurance yet,
Secure from separation evermore !

SONNET.—THE AGE OF GOLD.

These times deserve no song—they but deride
The poet's holy craft,—nor his alone ;
Methinks as little courtesy is shown
To what was chivalry in days of pride :
Honor but meets with mock :—the worldling shakes
His money-bags, and cries—" My strength is here ;
O'erthrows my enemy, his empire takes,
And makes the ally serve, the alien fear !"
Is love the object ? Cash is conqueror,—
Wins hearts as soon as empires—puts his foot
Upon the best affections, and will spur
His way to eloquence, when Faith stands mute ;
And for Religion,—can we hope for her,
When love and valor serve the same poor brute !

* The incident, as related in the text, really happened. The facts, known by survivors, were subsequently adduced in evidence in a court of justice, and constituted the point upon which the direction was given to the estates of the parties.

BILLOWS.

Gently, with sweet commotion,
Sweeping the shore,
Billows that break from ocean,
Rush to our feet;
Slaves that, with fond devotion,
Prone to adore,
Seek not to stint with measure,
Service that's meet;—
Bearing their liquid treasure,
Flinging it round,
Shouting the while the pleasure
True service knows,
Then, as if bless'd with leisure,
Flung on the yellow ground
Taking repose!

FALL OF THE LEAF.

I.

The leaves, the pleasant and green leaves that hung
Abroad in the gay summer woods, are dead;
They do not hear the morning carols sung
By the sad birds that miss the blooms they shed;
They know not of the vacancy they leave,
The cheerlessness of trees to which they clung—
How even the winds for their departure grieve,
How birds grow silent; how the groaning boughs
Rock sorrowful, the sport of every breeze;

And as a nun that takes the proper vows,
How nature hoods her beauty in her woe,
And silent walks beneath the naked trees,
Much wondering that she still survives the blow.
With such a silent sorrow on each tongue,
I marvel that their last dirge be not sung!

II.

Shall not the vagrant and light wooing breeze,
Fresh from its native seas
In the Pacific, wandering with the sun,—
While hurrying onward through the well-known trees
That now no more, as in sweet days of yore,
Yield shade and comfort to the desolate one,—
Prepare his dirge, and on the midnight gale
In token of his perish'd luxuries,
Pour forth his wail!
And yield, in very ecstasy of grief,
One fond lament above the perishing leaf!

III.

He hath not stay'd his flight,
But, tracking the lone land bird, he hath bent
His insusceptible wing throughout the night,
Far as the fancy's sight
Might trace the dim lines of the firmament—
And, ere the gray dawn from his ocean-bed
Rush'd to the visible heaven, hath turn'd his plume
To where the flowers, in a sweet tremulous bloom
Were wont to yield perfume,—
And, as an exile o'er whom hangs the doom,
He comes to find them dead.

IV.

And hath he then no wail?—
And folding round him not his mourning wing,
Will he forbear to sing
The melancholy anthem and sad tale?
Shall he not say, he, who forever grieves,
The story of the leaves?
And, with a tone to match the sad complain,
And desolate aspect of the world around,
Shall he not pour along the waste that strain
Of wild and incommunicable sound,
Such as in Mexique gulf the seaman hears,
Like scream of unknown sea-bird in his ears,
Vexing the black profound?

V.

He hath a voice for sorrow as delight;
For death as life; for night as for the dawn:
He sings the ruin which is in his sight,
He wails the perish'd beautiful and gone!
The plaint he pours, though cold to human sense,
And wild and vague, hath yet a magic tone
For the dumb nature full of competence,
And dear to her alone:
Yet, even to human thought it still must wear
The semblance of a moan,
The wild gush of a heart, that, in its woe,
First finds its voice: one asks not words to show
The speech of anguish; and, as now we hear,
The Fancy readily deems, that while he grieves
His home all desolate, his soul all drear,
The wanderer wails the leaves.

VI.

"Never—oh! never more,
Unburied honors of the pilgrim year,—
In glossy and bright garb of innocent green,
With crispéd veins from nature's palmy print,
And each sweet scent and lovely tinge and tint,
Shall ye appear,
The roving sense to charm, the eye to cheer·
The time—sweet time!—that ye and I have seen,
Is o'er, forever o'er!
Ye feel me not—I press ye—never more;
My early joy, your loveliness,—how brief!
I may forget ye on some happier shore,
But, on your fruitless now, and scentless bier,
I leave my tear!"

VII.

Away! away!
Far in the blaze of the descending day,
After that brief lament he spreads his wings—
Now that the summer charm that led astray
The licensed rover of wild Indian seas,
No longer clings
With blossoming odor, wooing his wild flight—
And, but the ruin of the leafless trees
Is there in token of the common blight!
Ah! who hath not been hopeless like the breeze?
Whose leaves and flowers, secure against the doom,
Have ever, through all seasons, kept their bloom,
Nor perish'd in a night?

THE EUTAW MAID.

The battle of the Eutaw Springs, one of the most brilliant events of the Revolution, is well known in the history of the partisan warfare carried on in the southern department.

I.

It was in Eutaw's covert shade, and on a hill-side stood
A young and gentle Santee maid, who watch'd the distant wood,
Where he, the loved one of her heart, in fearful battle then,
Had gone to flesh his maiden sword with Albion's martial men:
Untaught in fight, and all unused to join the strife of blows,—
Oh! can there be a doubt with her how the deadly battle goes?

II.

And wild the din ascends from far, and high in eddying whirls,
Above the forest trees and wide, the sulphur storm-cloud curls,
And fast and thick upon her ear the dreadful cries of pain,
The groan, the shriek, the hoarse alarm, run piercing to her brain:
She may not hope that he is safe when thousands fall around,
But looks to see his bloody form outstretch'd upon the ground.

III.

There's a cry of conquest on the breeze, the cannon's roar is still,—
She dares not look, she does not weep, her trembling heart is chill:
The tramplings of the victors come in triumph through the glade,
She hears the loud note of the drum, the clattering of the blade:
Perchance that very blade is red with the blood of him, her love;—
The thought is death, and down she sinks within the woodland grove.

IV.

But, a gentle arm entwines her form—a voice is in her ear,
Which, even in death's cold grasp itself, 'twould win her back to hear;

Her lips unclose, her eyes unfold once more upon the light,
And he is there, that gallant youth, unharm'd, before her sight!
Now happy is that Santee maid, and proudly blest is he,
And in her face the tear and smile are strangely sweet to see.

ALF-SONG.

I.

The sunbeam darting to the stream,
The birth that glows in dying,
Love's meeting hour and beauty's gleam,
And raptures born when flying;
How, if we speed o'er summits fair,
Just at each fountain dipping,
And pause to rest, in valleys rare,
Their single blisses sipping!

II.

The cup that flows for us must take
Its color from the fountain,
In whose embrace the blue skies wake,
Still dreaming of the mountain;—
We ask no better boon for us
While yet the bead is gleaming,
To snatch its single blessings thus,
Though all the rest be seeming.

III.

And still the leaf that skims the lake,
Shall satisfy our seeking;
And still the bird-note in the brake,
Be ample for our speaking;—

And still the dream at morning-tide,
When April buds awaken,
Shall welcome bring, though from our side
The other self be taken.

STANZAS.

Silent with all her vassal stars as ever,
Night in the sky,
Here, by this dark and lonely Indian river,
Scarce moaning by;—
Our spirits brood together in communion
Too deep for speech;
Thought wings its way to thought, and in their union
'Tis love they teach.

And yet how deep the mock to this condition!
That dream of youth,
Whose night-stars tremble over waves Elysian,
Whose day is truth—
Whose hope, with angel wings, to consummation
Speeds from its birth,
Whose joy, unfettered at its first creation,
Bends heaven o'er earth.

Hast thou not felt the cruel world's denial,—
Art thou not here;
Exiled and tortured, ere thy soul had trial
Of hope and fear;
Unknown and unconsider'd, thy devotion
Denied a shrine;—
Methinks, these waters speak for thy emotion,
And echo mine.

The love that blesses youth is none of ours—
No smiles, no tears—
A sky that never moved the earth to flowers,
In earlier years:—
But the deep consciousness, still speaking only,
Of the twin woe,
That finds fit music in these waters lonely,
That moan and go!

HEADS OF THE POETS.

I.—CHAUCER.

—— Chaucer's healthy Muse
Did wisely one sweet instrument to choose,
The native reed; which, tutor'd with rare skill,
Brought other Muses* down to aid its trill!
A cheerful song, that sometimes quaintly mask'd
The fancy, as the affections, sweetly task'd;
And won from England's proud and *foreign*† court,
For native England's *tongue*, a sweet report—
And sympathy—till in due time it grew
A permanent voice that proved itself the true,
And rescued the brave language of the land
From that‡ which help'd to strength the invader's hand!
Thus, with great patriot service, making clear
The way to other virtues quite as dear
In English liberty—which could grow alone,
When English speech grew pleasant to be known;

* The Provençal—the Italian.
† The Norman.
‡ The French.

To spell the ears of princes, and to make
The peasant worthy for his poet's sake.

II.—SHAKSPEARE.

—— 'Twere hard to say
Upon what instrument did Shakspeare play—
Still harder what he did not! He had all
The orchestra at service, and could call
To use still other implements unknown,
Or only valued in his hands alone!
The Lyre, whose burning inspiration came
Still darting upward, sudden as the flame;
The murmuring wind-harp, whose melodious sighs
Seem still from hopefulest heart of love to rise,
And gladden even while grieving; the wild strain
That night-winds wake from reeds that breathe in pain,
Though breathing still in music; and that voice
Which most he did affect—whose happy choice
Made sweet flute-accents for humanity
Out of that living heart which cannot die—
The catholic, born of love, that still controls,
While man is man, the tide in human souls.

III.—THE SAME.

—— His universal song
Who sung by Avon, and, with purpose strong,
Compell'd a voice from native oracles,
That still survive their altars by their spells—
Guarding with might each avenue to fame,
Where, trophied over all, glows Shakspeare's name!
The mighty master-hand in his we trace—
If erring often, never commonplace;
Forever frank and cheerful, even when woe
Commands the tear to speak, the sigh to flow;

Sweet without weakness—without storming, strong,
Jest not o'erstrain'd, nor argument too long;
Still true to reason, though intent on sport,
His wit ne'er drives his wisdom out of court;
A brooklet now, a noble stream anon,
Careering in the meadows and the sun;
A mighty ocean next, deep, far, and wide,
Earth, life, and heaven, all imaged in its tide!
Oh! when the master bends him to his art,
How the mind follows, how vibrates the heart!
The mighty grief o'ercomes us as we hear,
And the soul hurries, hungering, to the ear;
The willing nature, yielding as he sings,
Unfolds her secret and bestows her wings,
Glad of that best interpreter, whose skill
Brings hosts to worship at her sacred hill!

IV.—SPENSER.

It was for Spenser, by his quaint device,
To spiritualize the passionate, and subdue
The wild, coarse temper of the British Muse,
By meet diversion from the absolute:
To lift the fancy, and, where still the song
Proclaim'd a wild humanity, to sway
Soothingly soft, and, by fantastic wiles,
Persuade the passions to a milder clime!
His was the song of chivalry, and wrought
For like results upon society;
Artful in high degree, with plan obscure,
That mystified to lure; and, by its spells,
Making the heart forgetful of itself,
To follow out and trace its labyrinths,
In that forgetfulness made visible!

Such were the uses of his Muse; to say
How proper and how exquisite his lay—
How quaintly rich his masking—with what art
He fashions fairy realms and paints their queen,
How purely—with how delicate a skill—
It needs not, since his song is with us still!

V.—MILTON.

The master of a single instrument,
But that the Cathedral Organ, Milton sings
With drooping spheres about him, and his eye
Fix'd steadily upward, through its mortal cloud
Seeing the glories of eternity!
The sense of the invisible and the true
Still present to his soul; and, in his song,
The consciousness of duration through all time,
Of work in each condition, and of hopes
Ineffable, that well sustain through life,
Encouraging through danger and in death,
Cheering, as with a promise rich in wings!
A godlike voice, that through cathedral towers
Still rolls, prolong'd in echoes, whose deep tones
Seem born of thunder, that, subdued to music,
Soothe when they startle most! A Prophet Bard,
With utterance equal to his mission of power,
And harmonies, that, not unworthy heaven,
Might well lift earth to equal worthiness.

VI.—BURNS.

—— Thither at eve,
Where Burns still wanders with his violin song;
A melancholy conqueror, in whose sway
His own irregular soul grew dark and fell,

Incapable to spell, with resolute will,
The capricious genius that, o'er all beside,
Held perfect mastery. 'Twas here he went,
A man of pride and sorrows, weak yet strong,
With still a song discoursing to the heart,
The lowly human heart, of all its joys,—
Buoyant and cheerful, yet with sadness too,
Such sadness as still shows us love through tears.

VII.—SCOTT.

—— Not forgotten or denied,
Scott's trumpet lay of chivalry and pride;
Homeric in its rush, and, in its strife,
With every impulse brimming o'er with life,
Teeming with action, and the call to arms;—
A robust Dame, his muse, with martial charms,
To strive, when need demands it, or to love;—
The Eagle quite as often as the Dove.

VIII.—BYRON.

—— For Byron's home and fame,
It needed manhood only! Had he known
How sorrow should be borne, nor sunk in shame,
For that his destiny decreed to moan—
His muse had been triumphant over Time
As still she is o'er Passion: still sublime—
Having subdued her soul's infirmity
To aliment; and, with herself o'ercome,
O'ercome the barriers of Eternity,
And lived through all the ages; with a sway
Complete, and unembarrass'd by the doom
That makes of Nature's porcelain common clay!

IX.—A GROUP.

—— As one who had been brought
By Fairy hands, and as a changeling left
In human cradle—the sad substitute
For a more smiling infant—Shelley sings
Vague minstrelsies that speak a foreign birth,
Among erratic tribes. Yet not in vain
His moral, and the fancies in his flight
Not without profit for another race!
He left his spirit with his voice—a voice
Solely spiritual—which will long suffice
To wing the otherwise earthy of the time,
And, with the subtler leaven of the soul,
Inform the impetuous passions!
With him came,
Antagonist, yet still with sympathy,
Wordsworth, the Bard of the Contemplative—
A voice of purest thought in sweetest music!
—These, in themselves unlike, together link'd,
Appear in unison in after days,
Making progressive still the mental births,
That pass successively through rings of time,
Each to a several conquest, most unlike
That of its sire; yet borrowing of its strength,
Where needful, and endowing it with new,
To meet the fresh necessities which still
Haunt the free progress of each conquering race.

—Thus Tennyson and Barrett, Browning and Horne,
Blend their opposing faculties, and speak
For that fresh nature, which, in daily things,
Beholds the immortal, and from common forms

Extorts the Eternal still! So Baily sings
In Festus—so, upon an humbler rank,
Testing the worth of social policies,
As working through a single human will,
The Muse of Taylor argues—Artevelde,
Being the man who marks a popular growth,
And notes the transit of a thought through time,
Growing as still it speeds. . . . .
Exquisite
The ballads of Campbell, and the lays of Moore,
Appealing to our tastes, our gentler moods,
The play of the affections, or the thoughts
That come with national pride; and, as we pause
In our own march, delight the sentiment!
But nothing they make for progress. They perfect
The language, and diversify its powers—
Please and beguile, and, for the forms of art,
Prove what they are, and may be. But they lift
None of our standards; help us not in growth;
Compel no prosecution of our search,
And leave us, where they found us—with our time!

SONNET TO THE PAST.

Thy presence hath been grateful—thou hast brought
Toil and privation, which have tutor'd me
To strength and fit endurance; set me free
From vainest fancies—and most kindly wrought
On the affections which had else run wild,
Untrain'd by meet denial of their thirst.
What though I held thee yesterday accurst,—

Believe me not the vain and erring child
Still to remember chastening by its pain,
More than its uses;—True, that to my home
Thou hast brought grief, and often left it gloom;—
But that I do not of thy deeds complain,
Is proof that they have done no bootless part—
Have hurt my house, perchance, but help'd my heart.

STANZAS.

Ah! not that song, nor any song:
Thy music mocks the heart
With memories cherish'd still too long,
That will not now depart;
For me, o'er whom a blighted past
Will still its withering trophies cast,
There is no heaven in art:—
The strain that cannot hope restore,
But makes me feel the lost the more.

I ask not music's power to show
What earth has once possess'd;
Nor does it need that all should know
My heart has once been bless'd:
The tear thy song has made to start,
Betrays the secret of my heart,
The pang that will not rest;
But wakes to instant strength and sting,
When memory spreads her dusky wing.

That night-bird, with its chant, still nigh,
A sad, mysterious tone,

Recalling, with its boding cry,
The ghosts of glories gone;
Bends o'er me with each human strain,
Restores that *hour*, with all its pain,
Dark hour, I could not shun;
Brings back the full soul's trial then,
Which left me desolate 'mongst men!

They tell me that thy song is sweet,
And eyes that look delight,
Follow, with silent love, thy feet,
And gladden in thy sight;—
It needs not proof like this—thy strain,
That brings the perish'd back again,
The musical, the bright,—
May well persuade me of thy grace,
In pure white soul and angel face.

Enough—thou hast her charm divine,
To kindle and to move;
On others let thy beauties shine,
In others waken love;
Perchance—and it is sure my prayer—
Life's joys alone, and not its care,
Thy future fate may prove;
Enough, resembling her, I see
Her virtues, not herself, in thee.

THE WESTERN EMIGRANTS.

An aged man, whose head some seventy years
Had snow'd on freely, led the caravan ;—
His sons and sons' sons, and their families,
Tall youths and sunny maidens—a glad group,
That glow'd in generous blood and had no care,
And little thought of the future—follow'd him ;—
Some perch'd on gallant steeds, others, more slow,
The infants and the matrons of the flock,
In coach and jersey,—but all moving on
To the new land of promise, full of dreams
Of western riches, Mississippi-mad !
Then came the *hands*, some forty-five or more,
Their moderate wealth united—some in carts
Laden with mattresses ;—on ponies some ;
Others, more sturdy, following close afoot,
Chattering like jays, and keeping, as they went,
Good time to Juba's creaking violin.

I met and spoke them. The old patriarch,
The grandsire of that goodly family,
Told me his story, and a few brief words
Unfolded that of thousands. Discontent,
With a vague yearning for a better clime,
And richer fields than thine, old Carolina,
Led him to roam. Yet did he not complain
Of thee, dear mother—mother still to me,
Though now, like him, a wanderer from thy homes.
Thou hadst not chidden him, nor trampled down
His young ambition ;—hadst not school'd his pride
By cold indifference ; hadst not taught his heart

To doubt of its own hope, as of thy love,
Making self-exile duty. He knew thee not,
As I, by graves and sorrows. Thy bright sun
Had always yielded flowers and fruits to him,
And thy indulgence and continued smiles
Had made his pittance plenty—made his state
A proud one in the honors which thou gav'st,
Almost in's own despite. And yet he flies thee
For a wild country, where the unplough'd fields
Lie stagnant in their waste fertility,
And long for labor. His are sparkling dreams,
As fond as those of boyhood. Golden stores
They promise him in Mississippian vales,
Outshining all the past, compensating—
So thinks he idly—for the home he leaves,
The grave he should have chosen, and the walks,
And well-known fitness of his ancient woods.
Self-exiled, in his age he hath gone forth
To the abodes of strangers,—seeking wealth—
Not wealth, but money! Heavens! what wealth we give,
Daily, for money! What affections sweet—
What dear abodes—what blessing, happy joys—
What hopes, what hearts, what affluence, what ties,
In a mad barter where we lose our all,
For that which an old trunk, a few feet square,
May compass like our coffin! That old man
Can take no root again! He hath snapp'd off
The ancient tendrils, and in foreign clay
His branches will all wither. Yet he goes,
Falsely persuaded that a bloated purse
Is an affection—is a life—a lease,
Renewing life, with all its thousand ties
Of exquisite endearment—flowery twines,
That, like the purple parasites of March,

Shall wrap his aged trunk, and beautify
Even while they shelter. I could weep for him,
Thus banish'd by that madness of the mind,
But that mine own fate, not like his self-chosen,
Fills me with bitterer thoughts than of rebuke;—
He does not suffer from the lack of home,
And all the pity that I waste on him
Comes of my own privation. Let him go.

There is an exile which no laws provide for,
No crimes compel, no hate pursues;—not written
In any of the records! Not where one goes
To dwell in other regions—from his home
Removed, by taste, or policy, or lust,
Or the base cares of the mere creature need,
Or pride's impatience. Simple change of place
Is seldom exile, as it hath been call'd,
But idly. There's a truer banishment
To which such faith were gentle. 'Tis to be
An exile on the spot where you were born;—
A stranger on the hearth which saw your youth,—
Banish'd from hearts to which your heart is turn'd;—
Unbless'd by those, from whose o'erwatchful love
Your heart would drink all blessings:—'Tis to be
In your own land—the native land whose soil
First gave you birth; whose air still nourishes,—
If that may nourish which denies all care
And every sympathy,—and whose breast sustains,—
A stranger—hopeless of the faded hours,
And reckless of the future;—a lone tree
To which no tendril clings—whose desolate boughs
Are scathed by angry winters, and bereft
Of the green leaves that cherish and adorn.

FIRST PURPOSELESS STRIVINGS OF THE IMAGINATION.

A sickness at the heart that ever pines
For solitude, and baffled in the prayer,
Swells sometimes to a passion like despair!
Jealous of eyes—suspecting all designs,
And trembling for a secret which the heart
Grasps not itself;—still searching, as a life
The soothing of another, yet at strife
With him who first assumes the soother's part,
Nor trusting till too late!—A resolute will
To pine, and be alone, and desolate still;
By day in wood and wild, with vexing thought,
Removed from human converse; and by night
Striving in dreams, and, at the morning's light,
Looking, as with an angel we had fought.

STANZAS.

I.

The love that won thee did not speak,
The grief that mourns thee has no tear;
To paint thy virtues both were weak,
To lose them neither well can bear.
In boyhood's hours, 'mid childhood's glee,
And through the long succeeding years
The same,—thy presence were to me
What weeping memory still endears.

II.

Let those with mood more calm than mine,
Describe thy virtues as they will;
It is enough that they were thine,
I've lost them yet I love them still:
I love them still, though now no more
Their presence blesses mortal eye;
They dwell within my bosom's core,
And never sleep and cannot die!

III.

When all of earth that well could fade,
And beauty's sweetest blandishment,
The eye might deem, that then survey'd,
Immortal as omnipotent;—
Were crowded into earth,—there stood,
From all that weeping train apart,
One victim of a hopeless mood,
One keeper of a maddening heart.

IV.

To him the boon of memory came,
The young, the lovely, to restore
Warm, tender, as his bosom's flame,
Immortal as the love it bore!
But vain, though sweet, the boon it brings,
Unless it bids the buried live;
It gives him gleams of heavenly things,
But weeps o'er that it cannot give!

THE DECAY OF A PEOPLE.

This the true sign of ruin to a race—
It undertakes no march, and, day by day
Drowses in camp, or, with the laggard's pace,
Walks sentry o'er possessions that decay;
Destined, with sensible waste, to fleet away;—
For the first secret of continued power
Is the continued conquest;—all our sway
Hath surety in the uses of the hour;
If that we waste, in vain wall'd town and lofty tower!

THE TEXAN HUNTER.

I.

Oh! wilt thou be, dear maiden,
The Texan hunter's bride,
And tend his forest bower
By Colorado's side;
Thy childhood's home forgetting,
That newer home to prize,
Near where the sun is setting,
But where our sun must rise?

II.

I bring no wealth to woo thee,
But, in my grasp, I bear
The weapon, at whose sudden speech
The forest nations fear;

The wild Camanché flies the track
That I have blazed for thee,
And when I wind this yellow horn
The cougar seeks his tree.

III.

Of all the wild steeds of the West,
No one is better graced
Than this I bring to bear thy form
Across the prairie waste;
As little feels the infant,
Within his cradled height,
The waving of the slender bough,
As thou his easy flight.

IV.

And gay with richest flowers,
And green with leafy shade,
Shall be the forest bowers
Which Love for thee has made:
No high and haughty palace,
But, smiling through the green
Of waving, sea-like valleys,
Our snow-white cot is seen.

V.

Sweet groves and soft savannahs,
A clime of calm, it woos
With blossoms of the rainbow born,
And fruitage of its hues;
Broad seas asleep in meadows,
With ranks of cane that rise
Like plumed and painted warriors,
To sink before our eyes.—

VI.

But if within thy bosom
There burns a nobler life,
As dames in knightly days could share
The rapture of the strife;
Then, by my steed and rifle,
Let Mexic towers beware,
The eye that cheers my cabin now
Shall light my spirit there.

SONNETS.

I. THE APPROACH OF WINTER.

Comes winter with an aspect dark to me,
Harried with storms so long? Are his brows stern?
Speaks he a language of asperity,
Unfit for him to speak or me to learn?
And do I shrink from the impending stroke
That follows his keen chiding? Would I fly
The terror of his presence, and that yoke
Borne with so long and so reluctantly?
No! from its prison-house of care and pain
My spirit dares defy him. Well inured
To trial,—I have borne it—not in vain,
Since conquer'd is the destiny endured—
Endured with no base spirit! I have grown
Familiar with the future in the known.

II.

Yet bitter were the lessons of that past,
When life was one long winter! Childhood knew

Nor blossom nor delight. No sunshine cast
The glory of green leaves about mine eye;
No zephyr, laden with sweet perfumes, blew
For me its Eastern tribute from a sky
Looking down love upon me; and my mood
Yearn'd for its kindred—for the humblest tie
To human hopes and aspirations true!
Sickness, and suffering, and solitude
Couch'd o'er my cradle: cheerless was the glance
That watch'd my slumbers in those feeble hour.
When pity, with her tears, her only powers,
Might have brought hope, if not deliverance.

III. CHILDHOOD.

That season which all other men regret,
And strive, with boyish longing, to recall,
Which love permits not memory to forget,
And fancy still restores in dreams of all
That boyhood worshipp'd, or believed, or knew,—
Brings no sweet images to me—was true,
Only in cold and cloud, in lonely days
And gloomy fancies—in defrauded claims,
Defeated hopes, denied, denying aims;—
Cheer'd by no promise—lighted by no rays,
Warm'd by no smile—no mother's smile,—that smile,
Of all, best suited sorrow to beguile,
And strengthen hope, and, by unmark'd degrees,
Encourage to their birth high purposes.

IV. YOUTH.

Why should I fear the winter now, when free
To meet and mingle in the strifes of man;
The danger to defy which now I see,
The oppressor to o'erthrow whom now I can!

Childhood! the season of my weaknesses,
Is gone!—the muscle in my arm is strong;
No longer is there trembling in my knees,
And my soul kindles at the look of wrong,
And burns in free defiance!—never more
Let me recall the hour when I was weak,
To shrink, to seek for refuge, to implore;
When I was scorn'd or trampled, but to speak,
When anger, rising high, though crouching low,
Should, like the tiger, spring upon his foe.

V. STRUGGLE.

Yet, in recalling these vex'd memories,
Mine is no thought of vengeance! If I speak
Of childhood, as a time that found me weak,
I utter no complaint of injuries;
These tried, but did not crush me; and they made
My spirit rise to a superior mood,—
Taught me endurance, and meet hardihood,
And all life's better energies array'd
For that long conflict which must end in death,
Or victory!—and victory shall yet be mine!
They cannot keep me from my right—the spoil
Which is the guerdon of superior toil—
Devotion that, defying hostile breath,
Ceased not to "watch and pray," though stars refused to shine!

VI. MANHOOD.

Manhood at last!—and, with its consciousness,
Are strength and freedom; freedom to pursue
The purposes of hope—the godlike bliss,
Born in the struggle for the great and true!
And every energy that should be mine,

This day, I dedicate to its object,—Life!
So help me Heaven, that never I resign
The duty which devotes me to the strife;—
The enduring conflict which demands my strength,
Whether of soul or body, to the last;
The tribute of my years, through all their length,—
The future's compensation to the past!—
Boy's pleasures are for boyhood—its best cares
Befit us not in our performing years.

THE SHADE-TREES.

God bless the hand that planted these old trees,
Here, by the wayside. While the August sun
Sends down his brazen arrows on the plain,
They give us shelter. Panting in their shade
We gaze upon the path o'er which we came,
And, in the green leaves overhead, rejoice!
Far as the eye may reach, the sands spread out,
A granulated blaze, pain the dim sense,
And vex the slumberous spirit with their glare.
Like some o'erpolish'd mirror, they give back
The sun's intenser fires. The green snake writhes
To run along the track—the lizard creeps,
Carefully tender, o'er the wither'd leaves,
And shuns the wayside, which, in early spring,
He travell'd only;—while, on the moist track,
Where ran a small brook out, a shining group
Of butterflies fold up their wearied wings,
Mottled with gold and purple, and cling close

To the dank surface, drawing the coolness thence
Which the gray sands deny. A thousand forms,—
Insect and fly, and the capricious bird,
Erewhile that sang so gayly in the spring
To his just wedded partner,—forms of life,
And most irregular impulse,—all seem press'd,
As by the approach of death; and in the shade,
Hiding in leafy coverts and dense groves,
Where pines make natural temples for fond hearts,
And hopeless mourners,—seem in dread to wait
Some shock of nature. Summer reigns supreme,
With power like that of death; and here, beneath
This most refreshing shelter of old trees,
I hear a murmuring voice from out the ground,
Where work her agents; like the busy hum
From out the shops of labor, or, from far,
The excited beating of an army's pulse,
Mix'd in some solemn service.
'Twas a thought
Of good, becoming ancient patriarchs,
Of him who first, in the denying earth,
Planted these oaks. Heaven, for the kindly deed,
Look on his errors kindly! He hath had
A most benevolent thought to serve his kind,
And felt, in truth, the principle of love
For the wide, various family of man,
Which is the true religion. Happy, for mankind,
Were such the better toil of those who make
The sacred text a theme for bitterness,
Who clamor more than pray, vexing the heart
With disputation. Better far, methinks,
If seated by the wayside, they beheld
The sorrows of its pilgrims; raised the shade
To shelter in the noonday; show'd the way

To the secluded fountain; and brought forth
The bread, and bless'd it to the stranger's want,
Who might, even then, be on his way to heaven!—
How fortunate for him who succor'd then!

THE SACRIFICE UPON OUR ALTARS.

Our very passions leave us—our best tastes
Subside, as do our pleasures, and depart;
The moss and ivy grow about the heart,
And a cold apathy and dulness wastes
Our virgin fancies. We grow old apace,
While every flower that boyhood loved keeps young,
As if in bitter mockery of our pride!
And this it is to run ambition's race,
To lose the pulse of hope, youth's precious tide,
And through strange regions, and with unknown tongue,
As vain as Edward Irving's, wander wide,
Seeking our solemn phantoms,—things of air,
Thin, unsubstantial, which our hearts still grace
With homage, and our eyes still fancy bright and fair.

OH! WELCOME YE THE STRANGER.

Oh! welcome ye the stranger,
And think, if e'er you rove,
How sweet in foreign lands must be
The voice that proffers love!
How sweet when sad delaying,
Where Fate compels to roam,

If stranger lips should welcome give
And sweetly sing of home.

Oh! welcome ye the stranger,
For still, whate'er his gain,
How much, in dear ones lost to sight,
Must be his spirit's pain!
His smiles but ill betoken
The heart within his breast,
That silent beats with hopes deferr'd
And fears that will not rest.

Oh! welcome ye the stranger,
To whom your hearth shall bring
The image of his own, and show
Each dear one in the ring;
And as your song ascending
Wakes memories sweet of yore,
He'll think of her he left behind,
Whose song hath bless'd before.

CHILDRENS' EVENING GAMBOLS.

I.

Hear you not the merry sound?
Gather to the fairy round,
'Tis the hour, 'tis the hour,
When the gentle signs abound,—
When the bud begins to flower,
When the moon, with placid power,
Soothes and lights the happy ground.

II.

Leap you not to that array,
Purest hearts in pleasant play?—
  Would you lose, would you lose,
Aught of such a holiday,—
  While the songs of such a muse,
  Lead the chain'd soul where they choose,
Far, in boyhood's world, away?

III.

Sweet to watch that pleasant game,
Chaste but lovely, free from shame;
  Childhood sweet, childhood sweet,—
Eyes of fire you would not tame;—
  On the floor the rapid beat
  Of the music-mocking feet,
The free laugh and wild acclaim!

IV.

Oh! this future on the floor,
How it doth the past restore!—
  In our eye, in our eye,
Stands the maid we loved of yore,—
  When, like him, the urchin nigh,
  First we learn'd to love and sigh,
As we love and sigh no more.

THE MINIATURE.

I've thought upon it long, and to mine eyes,
Howe'er my feet have wander'd, it hath been
The sweet star that hath guided through the night,
And brought me home again. I've worshipp'd it,

Even as the Hindoo maiden her gay boat
Of flowers, her heart's first fond experiment,
Sent down the Ganges. I regard it now—
Though all my flowers have wither'd, and my boat
Been battled nigh to shipwreck—having loss
Of what the waters give not forth again—
With a beseeming reverence. And 'tis all,
So valued, but an image—one that needs
No color from the artist's brush, to raise
In features sensible. They have been touch'd
In more intense embodyings. Pearl and gold
Are but slight gear, its riches to secure,
And honor by their setting. Wouldst thou see?—
It is the picture of a delicate love,
Fair lady, and I've set it in my heart—
There, couldst thou look, thy own unwitting lips
Would murmur, with misgivings, to thy self,
"Where sat I to this painter?"

BEAUTY'S SPRING-TIME.

I.

Vainly thou tend'st thy bower,
Vainly thou deck'st the vine,
And joy'st in the richest flower
That doth upon Ashley shine;
Thou nigh, though spring advances,
Who seeks for her sunny train?
We do but glow in thy glances,
And the garden blossoms in vain.

II.

Spring is in thee, bright creature,
Thou bringer of songster and rose;
In thine is the blossoming feature,
Whence the life that is loveliness flows.
A glimpse of the bow descending,
The purple light on the sea,
A wing with the sunset blending,—
Oh! these have spoken for thee.

III.

And thus, when the gray-footed morning
First beats up the fleecy plain;
Ere the stars have had their warning,
And close their sad eyes in pain;
My heart grows glad in the promise
Of a holier reign to be,—
And, seeking the soul hid from us,
I find its flower in thee!

THE UNQUIET SPIRIT.

Midnight!—and I am watching with the stars!
Can ye not let me slumber for a while,
Ye roving thoughts—and thou, unquiet mood,
Still active, wandering through infinity,
All times and nations, changes, destinies,
With sleepless soul, and discontented gaze,
Finding no place of rest? Can ye not spare,
To the o'erwearied votary, one pause
From the sad spirit's vigil? Must he still

Climb the precipitous height, and, with no guide
Save the sad watchers brooding in the heavens,
And the stern instinct, into which resolved,
Ye do compel the labor, hurry him on,
Weary, and with no recompense, to gain
The solitary chaplet of sad flowers,
But little valued, which a stranger hand,—
When I am dead, and those who knew me once
Miss me no longer from the crowded way,—
Will place, perchance, upon my humble grave?

This is the trophy, and for this I toil!—
Yet am I proud among my fellow-men,
And strive with him whose aim is greatly bent
For the sole column;—and with marvellous dread
Shrink from each middle perch of eminence.
And, in my chamber, when the world is still,
And those who were most ready in the strife,
Have sunk to sweet repose,—wakeful, I ask,
Doth my ambition, then, but strive for this
Poor honor,—which no present hand bestows,
And the far future, like some tardy steed,
Brings, when too late, and only brings in vain?
And is it such poor victory which now
Keeps me from slumber—makes the violent pulse,
And the full veins upon my forehead, swell
With aimless tumult, while the unsettled heart,
Now bounding with keen hope, desponding now,
Yearns for some other state, some wider range
For action, and some truer sympathy?
Is it for this, I ask, ye gentler sprites
Which tend upon the discontented soul,
That the still night, with its sad, twiring stars,
Still rises on my gaze, while all besides

Are, in the dwellings of sweet dreams, at rest;
And even the bird that, pendent from my roof,
Murmured, erewhile, at intervals, his song
In wandering catches, wild, and more than sweet,
Hath sought his cover in the mazy wood?

My feeling and my reason are not one,
They do rebuke each other. With the one
The world is full of glowing images,
And life abounds in honors, and strong hearts
Bend to the lofty sway, and gentle eyes
Look forth a pure encouragement, more dear,
And it may be, though not so thought by men,
More full of worth and value than the rest.
'Tis thus that fancy, ever won with dreams,
Portrays its triumphs—until wisdom comes,
And with stern accents and unbending brow,
Experience at her side, proclaims them all
Shallow and profitless—things far beneath
The sober and strong estimate of thought.

I fear me she is true. I have not lived
Untaught by my own being, and the toil,
The battle for existence. Yet, I feel
There is a victory beyond reason's scope,
And out of her domain. The spirit feels
Its urgent nature, which, though dash'd with care,
Knows still a medicine that "physics pain"—
A golden draught, more potent than of old
The alchemist through years of toil pursued,
Wearing out life in idle search of that
Which should preserve it. If I must look forth,
Watching yon sad but lustrous galaxy,
Counting its many and divided lights,

Dispatching thought on missions unto them,
And lingering for response,—I shall not fear,
Thus, in the eye of heaven, to urge my claim
To those same thick-sown fields of glorious life,
My heritage—on which my spirit turns
With a most natural instinct, which approves
Its right, and justifies its high demand—
Our future dwelling-place, to which my soul,
Like one unjustly disinherited,
Still looks, though vain, and cannot cease to look.

SONNET.—REPROACH AND CONSOLATION.

Well said the master,—"The worst grief of all,
Is to remember, in our hours of woe,
How blest we have been!"* It were rightly so,
If, like Adam's memory of his wretched fall,
To the keen thought of pleasures ever gone,
There be the sting of self-reproach, to say,
"The seed is of thy planting—go thy way,
And let the curse be on thy head alone!"
This is the bitterer truth,—but it is one,
In bitterness thrice blessed, if it brings
Repentance, that, with healing on its wings,
Will cheer the future, and the past atone:
It were a grace to pray for, night and day,
In ashes,—while the world is out at play.

* "Nessun maggior dolore,
Che ricordarsi del tempo felice,
Nella miseria."

BALLAD.

I.

Hark! the trumpet's note through all our valleys;—
Red, the plains are weeping with the strife;
The song and dance have fled our peaceful alleys,
And the young warrior leaves the drooping wife;
But will she cling to homes by love forsaken?—
Not long she droops when from her side he goes;
In boyhood's guise, the weapon she hath taken,
And, all unknown, she fights against his foes!—
She hears the cry, "To arms!"
No fear her soul alarms,
As still, with lance in rest, she seeks the thick array;
Beside him, as he flies
From foe to foe, she plies
The eager steel, and shares the glory of the fray!

II.

Hark! the trumpet's note from fight recalling,
Night is in the deep with solemn eye;
Sad the starlight on the red plain falling,
Shows the wounded soldier where to die!
In the mournful bivouac beside him
She hath crouch'd in silence,—not to sleep;
But, above the slumbers not denied him,
With fond thought, a patient watch to keep!
Is it her name she hears,
That, borne to eager ears,
Glides from his sleeping lips her soul to bless?—
Ah! with what idle part
Would she subdue her heart!
Love triumphs still, and he awakes in her caress.

SUMMER WEST WIND.

I.

From what dear island in the Indian seas
  Com'st thou, sweet spicy breeze;—
The freshness of the morning on thy wing,
  And all the bloom of spring?—
Ah! ere thy flight was taken,
  The rose and shrub were shaken;
Thou stol'st to many a bower of bloom and bliss,
  Giving and taking many a balmy kiss!
Ah! happy, that in flying, thou not leavest
  Aught that thou need'st or grievest;
Thy spirit knows not fetters, though subdued,
  For a long time, thy mood;—
Yet, let the west implore thee,
  The sweet south smile before thee,
The murmur of their fountains meet thine ear,
  And thou, anon, art there!
The lone one will forget her loneliness
  As thou uplift'st her tress,
Kissing, with none to check,
  The whitest neck,—
She blushing, with fond fancies, that repine
  For other lips than thine,—
Ah! why not mine!

II.

Methinks from thy sweet breath and tender motion,
  Thy last flight was from caves in southern ocean,
Spar-gemm'd and lustrous;—there, thy form has crept
  To the pale Nereid as she sighing, slept!
Ah, wanton!—thou hast toy'd with tangled hair,

And bent o'er beauties rare ;
Seal'd up bright eyes with kisses, that anon,
When sleep and thou wert gone,
Wept at the hapless waking which destroy'd
The sweetest world of void !—
Thou might'st have linger'd in thy watch secure,—
Thy kisses, though they waken'd her, were pure ;
Nay, on her lips thou might'st impress the seal
Her cheeks still blush to feel ;
Her sea-shell, meanwhile, suiting with sweet notes,
Till slowly, through its purple winding, floats
Love's fondest plaint,—
The saddest dear'st effusion of her saint;
Touch'd to the soul with such a tenderness,
She may no more express,—
Her only grief, her joy in such excess,
No words may well declare, no music paint !

III.

Canst thou desert her, vain one !—wilt thou fly,
With sunset, when the purple billow glows,
As with new passion 'neath the western sky ?—
Thy flight hath borne with it her dear repose ;—
That music, as it goes,
Robs her of life with love ;—unless it be
She still can fly with thee ;—
Borne far with dying day,
A faint but fairy lay,—
That moves her,—following through the fields of air,—
Thee seeking, false one, seeking everywhere !

IV.

Even in his fiercest hour
Thou mock'st the great sun's power,

Thy broad wing o'er the quivering plain below,
Shield'st fondly from his glow,
And cherishest and cheer'st the drooping flower.
Lo! smiling, the green trees that forward bend
With thy fast flight to blend;
Lo! the cool'd waves that dimpling ocean's isles,
Implore thee with a thousand frantic wiles,
Flinging their shells along the yellow beach,
That thou mayst teach,
With lingering whisper, as thou dartest by,
To every twisted core, its melody.

v.

Swart labor greets thee from his fields with prayer,
And bows with dripping hair,
Vest open wide and blue eye that declares
A gladness born of cares.—
Mother of meekness, child of happy birth,
Sprung from the sky, yet born alone for earth,—
Glows his broad bosom as he sees thy wing,
Slow spreading, and with silence hovering,
A purple cloud descending,
Above his green fields bending,
And blessing!—Thou hast cheer'd him with thy breath,
When all was still as death;
Leaves quivering in the close and stifling air;
A languor, like despair,
Stretch'd o'er the earth, and through the coppery sky
That burns the upholding eye;—
Streams fled from ancient channels, and the blade
Blasted as soon as made—
And the sad drooping of all things that sigh,
With the dread fear to die!

VI.

Ah! still above our green plains brood, and bring
Life to their languishing!
Sweet breath and dear protection! go not soon,
Though, with the rising moon,
The mermaid woos thee to her silvery isle,
And songs from green-hair'd ocean-maids beguile,
No longer dumb with rapture, waiting thee.
We may not set thee free,—
Let prayer secure thee for a season, till
Prayer true as ours gives freedom to thy will!
Then linger not too long, nor all forget
How fondly, when we met,
Our arms were spread to greet thee,—and each breast,
Wide, opening for its guest.
Come to us waking—sleeping; do not fear
To waken, with thy music in each ear,
Music of flowers and of the gentle waves
That break in moonlight caves,—
Music of youth and hope, which, if it know
A touch of tears or woe,
Is yet a woe of tenderness, that brings
Gleams still of sweetest things;—
And, if it tell of night,
Tells of it only when its stars are bright,
And in the silvery, soft and tremulous air,
The moon and thou art both commercing there.

THE KINGS IN SHEOL.

PARAPHRASE.—Isaiah xiv.

Hark! the nations take a song
Of deliverance from the strong;—
Still they cry on every hand,
There is freedom for the land;
For the oppressor's overthrown,
And the golden city's down!—
He who smote the world in wrath
Now lies silent in his path;
None so feeble but may stride
O'er the brow they deified:—
God, in vengeance, hath arisen;
He hath broke the captive's prison;
In his smile a freedom bringing,
Which hath set the whole world singing;
All exulting o'er the ruin
Which declares the dread undoing
Of the awful power that made
Earth grow barren in its shade!
The pines, that trembled at his tread,—
The cedars, doom'd to bow the head
Beneath his lordly axe, that won
The grayest brows of Lebanon,—
Now shout triumphant in the blow
That shields them hence from overthrow.
How stands above his open grave,
With words of scorn, his meanest slave!

To his gloomy ghost they cry,
As it shrouds it from the sky,—
Sinking, under doom of woe,
To the awful realm below.

Thou, that lately stood elate,
Hence! to meet a loathlier state,—
Hell, to hail thee, stirs her dead!—
Rising, as they hear thy tread,
Lo! the great ones of the earth
Hail thee with a mocking mirth;
From their thrones of ancient might,
Rise, to welcome thee to—Night.
Thou, with common voice, they speak,
Art become like us, and weak;—
Pomp and music could not save,
All thy pride is in the grave;
'Neath thee winds the worm,—above,
Crawls and clings, with loathsome love!
How art thou fallen! that, like the star,
The son of morning, shone afar,
Flung, midst the glory of thy light,
In darkness from thy mountain height;
Even at the moment when thy aim
Had been the cope of heaven to claim,—
Above the stars of God to rise,
And sway the assembly of the skies!
Lo! where thou sink'st, with mortal dread,
While Sheol closes o'er thy head;—
Grasping her sides with feeble will,
Yet sinking downward, downward still;
How—could they see thee from above,—
The eyes that never watch'd in love,—

How would they cry—can this be he
That made the crowded nations flee,
Did, in his wrath, the kingdoms shake,
And make earth's far foundations quake!

MONNÀ.

I.

THERE was an eye, a steadfast eye,
That once I loved,—I love it now;—
And still it gazes on my brow,
Unchanged through all,—unchangingly.

II.

It could not change, though it has gone;—
For 'twas a thing of soul;—and so
It did not with the mortal go
To that one chamber, still and lone.

III.

It had a touch, a winning touch,
Of twilight sadness in its glance;
And look'd, at times, as in a trance,
Till I grew sad, I loved so much.

IV.

For life is selfish, and the tear
In one we love is like a gloom;
And still I wept the stubborn doom
That made a thing of grief so dear.

V.

Through sunny hours and cloudy hours,
And hours that had nor sun nor cloud,
That eye was wrapt, as in a shroud,
Such shroud as autumn flings o'er flowers.

VI.

It had a language dear to me,
Though strange to all the world beside;
And many a grief I strove to chide
Grew sweet to mine idolatry.

VII.

I could not stay the grief, nor chase
The cloud that gloom'd the earnest eye;
But gave,—'twas all,—my sympathy,
And woe was written on my face.

VIII.

'Twas on my face, as in my heart;
And when the Lady Monna died,
Whom still I loved,—I never sigh'd,
But tearless saw the lights depart.

IX.

They bore her coldly to the tomb;
They took me to my home away;
Nor knew that from that vacant day,
My home was with her in the gloom.

X.

They little knew how still we went,
Together, in the midnight shade,
Communing, with wet eyes, that made
Our very passions innocent.

XI.

Born of the cloud, her mournful eye
Was on me still, as shines the star,
That, drooping from its heights afar,
Broods ever on eternity.

XII.

It led me aye through folds of shade,
By day and darkness still the same,
And, heedless of all mortal blame,
I follow'd meekly where it bade.

XIII.

They watch'd my steps, and scann'd my face,
And vex'd my heart till I grew stern ;—
For curious eyes have yet to learn
How sorrow dreads each finger trace.

XIV.

Mine was too deep a love to be
The common theme for idle tongue,
And when they spoke of her, they wrung
My spirit into agony.

XV.

I live a lone and settled woe ;—
I care not if the day be fair
Or foul,—I would that I were near
The maid they buried long ago.

UR-LIGHT.

Ere, at first, the seals were broken,
And the motive word had spoken,
Earth was but an idiot wonder,
Born in cloud and clad in thunder;
Blindly striving, vainly roaring,
Wildly plunging, feebly soaring,
Whirling with a fretful motion
Like a ship in peevish ocean;—
Graceless all, in grove and fountain,
Shapeless all, in vale and mountain;—
Hopeless, heartless, songless, sightless,
Cold and dismal, soulless, sprightless;—
Little dreaming then of glory,
Which should make so sweet a story
Music-weaving, music-winning,
Closing sweet for sweet beginning;
Borne across the tract of ages,
Still in sweet successive stages,—
In their daily march untying,
Sounds forever thence undying;—
In their daily music, freeing,
Souls, forever thence in being;—
Beauty still, for song revealing,
Love, that finds for beauty, feeling,—
Hope that knows what truth shall follow,—
Truth that hope alone shall hallow!
But a word must first be spoken,
Ere the heavy seals are broken;
And bright clouds of spirits, chosen,—
Watchful, never once reposing,

Hang amid the void, upgazing,
Where the great world's soul is blazing.
Hark! a voice is heard, as calling,
And a star is seen, as falling,
Star of soul, whose spell symphonious,
Makes stars, systems, suns, harmonious!
Oh! that blessed sound, that thrilling
Earth and matter, make them willing!
Hark! the angels join, rejoicing
As they hear that highest voicing;
Stills the ocean, wildly rushing,
As their melody is gushing;—
Lo! the volcan stays his thunder,
And his red eyes ope in wonder!—
Earth, no longer blind, rejoices,
Clapping hands and lifting voices;
While the eastern sky is streaking,—
Hues of white, like lightning breaking,
Lighten ocean up with splendor,
Make the rugged mountains tender,
As still crowding into cluster,
They implore the growing lustre.
Tree and flow'ret, vale and mountain,
Plain and forest, lake and fountain,
Grove and prairie, rock and river,
Give their glories to the giver;—
Win their voices with their seeing,
Find, in light, their fount of being;
And at eve, its smile imploring,
Still, with dawn, begin adoring;—
Ah! by light eternal bidden,
Light shall never more be hidden.

THE LONELY ISLET.

I.

Lift the oar, as silently
By yon sacred isle we pass;
Know we not if still she sleeps,
Where the wind such whisper keeps,
In yon waving grass!
Death's a mocker to delight,
That we know,—and yet,—
There was that in every breath
Of her motion—in the set
Of her features, fair and whole—
In the flashing of her eye,
Spirit joyous still, and high,
Speaking the immortal soul,
In a language warm and bright—
That should mock at death!

II.

Silently!—still silently!
Oh! methinks, if it were true,
If, indeed, she sleeps—
Wakeful never, though the oar
Of the well-beloved one, nigh,
Break the water as before;—
When, with but the sea in view,
And the sky-waste, and the shore,
Or some star that, sinking, creeps,
Between whiles of speech, to show
How sweet lover's tears may flow,—
They together went, forgetting,
How the moon was near her setting,
Down amid the waters low;—

III.

Then no more should lovely things,
Moon or star, or zephyr, stoop,—
But a cloud with dusky wings,
Gloom outgiving, still should droop,
O'er that islet lone:—
And the long grass by the breeze
Sullen rising from the seas,
Should make constant moan!
Silent!—Hark!—that dipping oar,—
Oh! methinks, it roused a tone
As of one upon the shore!—
'Twas the wind that swept the grass!—
Silently, oh! silently,—
As the sacred spot we pass!

SYBILLA.

IN ILLUSTRATION OF A PICTURE.

Her brow is raised, her eye in air,—
The spirit burns and triumphs there!—
Mark the sacred strength that dwells
Where that pure white forehead swells;
Lo! the sacred fire that streams
From that deep eye's sudden gleams,
As a shaft of lightning driven
Through the cloud-veil'd deeps of heaven!

What the passion in that soul,
Thus that bursts and scorns control?
Can it be the lowly birth,—

Passion, which has root in earth—
Which may govern thus, and move,
Soul so high with mortal love?—
No! the feeling in that eye
Finds its birth-place in the sky.

She hath thrown aside the pen,
Which she straight resumes agen:—
Coursing o'er the spotless leaf,
Lo! her heart hath told its grief:
What a sorrow in that tone!
What a passion in that moan!
And the big tear, in her eye,
How it speaks the destiny!

Read the letters;—speak them;—lo!
What a story writ, of woe;
Woe is me, that heart like thine,
Kindling thus, and pure, should pine;
Woe is me, that in thy morn,
Thou shouldst blossom thus forlorn;
Yet the doom is said in sooth,
Thou shalt perish in thy youth:—

Lose the promise at thy birth;
Lose the pleasant green of earth;
Lose the waters, lose the light,
Sweet from sense and fair from sight;
Ere the breaking of thy heart,
From each dear affection part,
Die in spirit, ere the doom
Drags the mortal to the tomb!—

Thus the fearful prophecy
Glares before thy l ndling eye;

Thy own fingers pen the word,
Which thy coal-touch'd ear hath heard;
Thou art doom'd to witness all,
Thou hast loved and cherish'd, fall,—
Fall,—the deadliest form of death—
From the friendship, from the faith!

This is worst—for death is naught
To the high and hopeful thought;
'Tis a deeper pang that rends,
In the parting of firm friends;
In the wrenching of that tie
Which links souls of sympathy;
In the hour that finds us lone,
Making o'er the false our moan.

Death she fears not;—but to part,
With each young dream of the heart;
That first hope that brought the rest,
All its sweet brood, to the breast;
Where a virgin in her cares,
Love a mother grew to snares,
Which, with harbor'd vipers strove,
At the last, to strangle Love!—

Yet her sacred soul is strong;
She maintains the struggle long;
In her cheek the pale is bright,
And the tear-drop hath its light;
On the lip the moan that's heard
Is the singing of a bird,
Striving for the distant quire;—
And her fingers clasp the lyre.

She is dying,—dying fast,
But in music to the last;—
Oh! sad swan, thy parting lay
Is the sweetest of thy day;
And it hath a winged might
Bearing up the soul in flight,
Still ascending, seeking place,
'Mong the angels, for a grace.

THE BURDEN OF THE DESERT.

A PARAPHRASE.—ISAIAH XXI.

I.

THE burden of the Desert,
The Desert like the deep,
That from the south in whirlwinds
Comes rushing up the steep;—
I see the spoiler spoiling,
I hear the strife of blows;
Up, watchman, to thy heights, and say
How the dread conflict goes!

II.

What hear'st thou from the desert?—
"A sound, as if a world
Were from its axle lifted up
And to an ocean hurl'd;
The roaring as of waters,
The rushing as of hills,
And lo! the tempest-smoke and cloud,
That all the desert fills."

III.

What seest thou on the desert?—
"A chariot comes," he cried,
"With camels and with horsemen,
That travel by its side;
And now a lion darteth
From out the cloud, and he
Looks backward ever as he flies,
As fearing still to see!"

IV.

What, watchman, of the horsemen?—
"They come, and as they ride,
Their horses crouch and tremble,
Nor toss their manes in pride;
The camels wander scatter'd,
The horsemen heed them naught,
But speed, as if they dreaded still
The foe with whom they fought."

V.

What foe is this, thou watchman?—
"Hark! Hark! the horsemen come;
Still looking on the backward path,
As if they fear'd a doom;
Their locks are white with terror,
Their very shout's a groan;
'Babylon,' they cry, 'has fallen,
And all her gods are gone!'"

THE EDGE OF THE SWAMP.

'Tis a wild spot, and even in summer hours,
With wondrous wealth of beauty and a charm
For the sad fancy, hath the gloomiest look,
That awes with strange repulsion. There, the bird
Sings never merrily in the sombre trees,
That seem to have never known a term of youth,
Their young leaves all being blighted. A rank growth
Spreads venomously round, with power to taint;
And blistering dews await the thoughtless hand
That rudely parts the thicket. Cypresses,
Each a great ghastly giant, eld and gray,
Stride o'er the dusk, dank tract,—with buttresses
Spread round, apart, not seeming to sustain,
Yet link'd by secret twines, that, underneath,
Blend with each arching trunk. Fantastic vines,
That swing like monstrous serpents in the sun,
Bind top to top, until the encircling trees
Group all in close embrace. Vast skeletons
Of forests, that have perish'd ages gone,
Moulder, in mighty masses, on the plain;
Now buried in some dark and mystic tarn,
Or sprawl'd above it, resting on great arms,
And making, for the opossum and the fox,
Bridges, that help them as they roam by night.
Alternate stream and lake, between the banks,
Glimmer in doubtful light: smooth, silent, dark,
They tell not what they harbor; but, beware!
Lest, rising to the tree on which you stand,
You sudden see the moccasin snake heave up
His yellow shining belly and flat head

Of burnish'd copper. Stretch'd at length, behold
Where yonder Cayman, in his natural home,
The mammoth lizard, all his armor on,
Slumbers half-buried in the sedgy grass,
Beside the green ooze where he shelters him.
The place, so like the gloomiest realm of death,
Is yet the abode of thousand forms of life,—
The terrible, the beautiful, the strange,—
Wingéd and creeping creatures, such as make
The instinctive flesh with apprehension crawl,
When sudden we behold. Hark! at our voice
The whooping crane, gaunt fisher in these realms,
Erects his skeleton form and shrieks in flight,
On great white wings. A pair of summer ducks,
Most princely in their plumage, as they hear
His cry, with senses quickening all to fear,
Dash up from the lagoon with marvellous haste,
Following his guidance. See! aroused by these,
And startled by our progress o'er the stream,
The steel-jaw'd Cayman, from his grassy slope,
Slides silent to the slimy green abode,
Which is his province. You behold him now,
His bristling back uprising as he speeds
To safety, in the centre of the lake,
Whence his head peers alone,—a shapeless knot,
That shows no sign of life; the hooded eye,
Nathless, being ever vigilant and sharp,
Measuring the victim. See! a butterfly,
That, travelling all the day, has counted climes
Only by flowers, to rest himself a while,
And, as a wanderer in a foreign land,
To pause and look around him ere he goes,
Lights on the monster's brow. The surly mute
Straightway goes down; so suddenly, that he,

The dandy of the summer flowers and woods,
Dips his light wings, and soils his golden coat,
With the rank waters of the turbid lake.
Wondering and vex'd, the pluméd citizen
Flies with an eager terror to the banks,
Seeking more genial natures,—but in vain.
Here are no gardens such as he desires,
No innocent flowers of beauty, no delights
Of sweetness free from taint. The genial growth
He loves, finds here no harbor. Fetid shrubs,
That scent the gloomy atmosphere, offend
His pure patrician fancies. On the trees,
That look like felon spectres, he beholds
No blossoming beauties; and for smiling heavens,
That flutter his wings with breezes of pure balm,
He nothing sees but sadness—aspects dread,
That gather frowning, cloud and fiend in one,
As if in combat, fiercely to defend
Their empire from the intrusive wing and beam.
The example of the butterfly be ours.
He spreads his lacquer'd wings above the trees,
And speeds with free flight, warning us to seek
For a more genial home, and couch more sweet
Than these drear borders offer us to-night.

THE STRUGGLE OF ENDOWMENT WITH FORTUNE.

When thou shalt put my name upon the tomb,
Write under it, "Here lies the weariest man
That ever struggled with a wayward ban,
The victim from his birth-hour to a doom
That made all nature war against his will;

Made profitless his toil, its fruits denied
To patient courage and ambition still ;
His tasks decreed, his industry decried ;
And left him weary of the sun, whose flight
Brought him the gloom without the peace of night.
His toilsome pathway ever was uphill,—
A hill forever growing,—still his draught
Was water in a sieve that could not fill,
And bitter was his cup, or drunk, or left unquaff'd."

MORAL CHANGE.

Darkness is gathering round me, but the stars,
Silent and unobtrusive, stealing out,
Lend beauty to the night. The air comes cool
Up from the fountain ; and the murmuring breeze,
Gushing through yonder valley, has a song
Spelling the silence to such mystery
As mingles with our dreams. It is the hour
When sad, sweet thoughts have sway ;—when memory,
Triumphant o'er the past, waves her green wand,
And bids the clouds roll back, and lifts the veil
That had been closed behind us as a wall,—
And the eye sees, and the heart feels, and lives
Once more in its old feelings. I retrace
The homes of past affections, and dear hopes,
And dreams that look'd like hopes, and fled as well.
This is the spot—I know it as of old
By various tokens, but 'tis sadly changed.—
Men look not as they did ; and flowers that grew,
Nursed by some twin affections, grow alone,

Pining for old attendance. Thus, our change
Brings a worse change on nature. She will bloom
To bless a kindred spirit; but she flies
The home that yields no worship. She is seen
Through the sweet medium of our sympathies,
And has no life beside. 'Tis in our eye
Alone that she is lovely—'tis our thought
That makes her dear, as only in our ears
Lies the young minstrel's music, which were harsh,
Did not our mood yield up fit instrument
For his congenial fingers.

It is thus,—
The beautiful evening, the secluded vale,
The murmuring breeze, the gushing fountain, all
So exquisite in nature to the sense,
So cheering to the spirit—bring me naught
But shadows of a gloomy thought that rise
With the dusk memory—with repeated tales,
Censuring the erring heart-hope with its loss:—
Loss upon loss—the dark defeat of all
The pleasant plans of boyhood—promises
That might have grown in fairy land to flowers,
And were but weeds in this. They did but wound,
Or cheat and vanish with deluding glare:
Having the aspect of some heavenly joy,
They also had its wings, and, tired of earth,
Replumed them back for the more natural clime,
And so were lost to ours. Hopes still wrong
And torture, when they grow extravagant—
Youth is their victim ever, for they grow,
With the advancing seasons, into foes
That wolve upon him. 'Tis a grief to me,
Though a strange pleasure still, thus to look forth,
Watching, through lengthening hours, so sweet a scene,

And winning back old feelings as I gaze.
Boyhood had drawn a picture fair like this
On fancy's vision. Ancient oaks were there,
Giving the landscape due solemnity—
A quiet streamlet trickled through a grove,
And the birds sang most sweetly in the trees—
But then the picture was not incomplete,
Nor I alone, as now.

SONNET.—FRIENDSHIP.

Though wrong'd, not harsh my answer! Love is fond,
Even pain'd,—and rather to his injury bends,
Than chooses to make shipwreck of his friends
By stormy summons. He hath naught beyond
For consolation, if that these be lost;
And rather will he hear of fortune cross'd,
Plans baffled, hopes denied,—than take a tone
Resentful,—with a quick and keen reply
To hasty passion and impatient eye,
Such as by noblest natures may be shown,
When the mood vexes! Friendship is a seed
Needs tendance: You must keep it free from weed,
Nor, if the tree has sometimes bitter fruit,
Must you for this lay axe unto the root.

THE LAY OF THE CARIB DAMSEL.

I.

Come, seek the ocean's depths with me,
For there are joys beneath the sea,—
Joys, that when all is dark above,
Make all below a home of love!

II.

In hollow bright and fountain clear,
Lo! thousand pearl await us there;
And amber drops that sea-birds weep
In sparry caves along the deep.

III.

A crystal chamber there I know,
Where never yet did sunshaft go;
The soft moss from the rocks I take,
Of this our nuptial couch to make.

IV.

There, as thou yieldest on my breast,
My songs shall soothe thy happy rest,—
Such songs as still our prophets hear,
When winds and stars are singing near.

V.

These tell of climes, whose deep delight
Knows never change from day to night;
Where, if we love, the blooms and flowers,
And fruits, shall evermore be ours.

VI.

Oh! yield thee to the hope I bring,
Believe the truth I feel and sing,
Nor teach thy spirit thus to weep
Thy Christian home beyond the deep.

VII.

'Tis little,—ah! too well I know,
The poor Amaya may bestow,—
But if a heart that's truly thine
Be worthy thee, oh! cherish mine!

VIII.

My life is in thy look—for thee
I bloom, as for the sun, the tree;
My hopes, when thou forget'st thy woes,
Unfold as flowers, when winter goes.

IX.

And though, as our traditions say,
There bloom the worlds of endless day,
I would not care to seek the sky,
If there thy spirit did not fly.

THE MAGIC VOICE.

'Twas a voice that rose in the far blue sky,
The voice of a trumpet melody;
And it woke to joy all the subject things,
And brought to the feeble the strength of wings;

The heart grew glad in the lonely breast,
By the soothing sweet of that voice possess'd;
And the eye flash'd bright, as it look'd to see
The source of so glad a mystery;
While the skies, late gloom'd with the growing nig
In the dawn of a better hope grew bright!
It floated along, that voice so clear,
And it brought new strength to the soul of fear,
And men grew glad, they knew not why,
As the musical murmurs came floating by;
A mystery lay in each magic tone,
That made the heavens and earth its own;
And the sun was spell'd in his march above,
As brooding fond o'er a realm of love,
While the drooping stars on each lonely height,
Gave echoes back of their soft delight.

Though the summer had gone, though the winter cam
The tones of that voice were still the same;
And it had a power to make of the cold
But a new spur to the young and old;
The city grew brave in its arts and arms,
And the Court in new virtues put on new charms;
While the reapers look'd up from the sun-ripe field,
Joyous and wild in its wondrous yield;
They saw that wherever that music had been,
The fruits grew ripe, and the fields were green.
Oh! then was the nation's greatness known,
And genius grew stronger than Church and Throne;
Valor went forth, and his spear of light
Bore a fresh laurel from every fight;
And the peaceful, but conquering arts, they wrought
Triumphs more goodly in fields of Thought:
The sculptor, from caverns of rock, bade rise

The Silent Grandeur to human eyes;
And the Painter, with pencil of magic, made
The Beautiful steal from the dusky shade.
Ah! for how long a season came,
The spells of that voice, rejoicing Fame!
Even so long as the nation heard,
Still grew the spells of its potent word;
Still did it prompt and guide to toils,
Great in their grandeur and rich in their spoils;
All that it ask'd was the patient ear,
The heedful heart, and the trustful care;
The Faith, that in every hope believes,
The Love that, in humbleness, still achieves!

But there was a cry of wail by night,
As if for a star that had left its height;
And silence fell on the listening ear,
With a feeling of chill and a spell of fear:
Valor went forth to win no more,
And the Genius now grovell'd that soar'd before;
The arts of the city, the courtly grace,
Fled, as they never there had place;
They had mock'd and banish'd that magic voice,
And the land might never again rejoice!

ELODIE.

I.

A BIRD that had no song by day,
But crouch'd in sadness in the shade,
As soon as came the evening's ray,
Took wing and soar'd aloft,

And, with a music soft,
Sweet melodies for all the forest made.
Elodie! Elodie!
Thus evermore the plaintive ditty rose—
Elodie! Elodie!
Subsiding to a murmur at the close,
That grew to silence but was not repose,
And might be tears, for still
The accent seem'd to fill,
As of a heart still bursting to be free—
With evermore that chant—sad chant—of Elodie.

II.

They tell of one denied, who fled
His human to a forest home;
Who laid at last his aching head
Beneath the wood and slept,
While death upon him crept,
And, with a holy word, expell'd his gloom.—
Elodie! Elodie!
Was still the last fond murmur of his breast—
Elodie! Elodie!
And from that moment a wild bird grew blest,
With the sweet burden never more to rest—
For ever, with the night,
Eager in song and flight,
As with a soul still bursting to be free,
His wings swell out with still that chant of Elodie.

NIGHT-WATCHING.

How still is this night's solitude—how calm
All the dim nature round! I hear no voice
From out this populous city—see no light
Beckoning from well-known dwelling of my youth
To some gay hearth and laughing company.
Alone among the stranger, I am sad,
Seeking familiar forms I may not find,
And sorrowing in that bondage of the clay
That checks the spirit's flight to its own home,
Beyond the heaving waters. There, my child
Plays in the summer flowers, that, while they glow,
Have lurking death beneath them. Pestilence
Walks thither in the noonday; and the airs,
Balm breathing, from the bosom of the night,
Are tainted with the fever gale that reeks
From the rank gardens and o'erteeming fields,
That yield the proud man plenty. God of Heaven,
Be with that child in mercy. Guard her well,
With thy o'erwatchful blessings. Shield her breast
From sudden night-winds;—from her red lips drive
The hovering fever. Be thy pitying love
Before her innocent bosom, that, no more,
Her father's arm may shield—his watchful care
Protect by human providence—his love
Die for, if such the sudden need, when wrong
Strikes at the imploring trembler, which it does
When peril seems least present. Here, afar,
My knees are bent to thee—my proud heart sinks
In prayer,—the big tears gather in my eyes,
And, with a deep humility that feels

Its weakness, thinking on that child of love,
My soul implores thy blessings on her head,
In smiles that bring her body health—her mind
Ripeness and purity, that she may bloom,
Worthy of life and happiness and thee.

The city is around me, but its strifes
Are hush'd to silence. What a god is sleep,
That can so chain the faculties of men,
The fearful moods, the restless energies,
So busy and so turbulent a while
Some three hours past, and now so sternly still,
It seems some eastern city of the dead!

Where is the artisan, whose hammer clink'd
On the fire-darting anvil through the day?—
The pedler, who was vaunting o'er his wares,
His worldly wealth about him—rich withal?
The tradesman, conning o'er his daily sales
With eager lip, and eye upon the watch,
Not to be over-bargain'd?—where the youth,
Anxious for honor and distinction, won
By noisy declamation in the crowd
About the forum?—all are sunk in sleep!
Sleep, the subduer of the sick man's pulse,
Bringer of pleasant dreams and airy thoughts,
That while away the fever'd toils of earth,
And give a bounding impulse to the blood,
Distemper'd by the noise-oppresséd brain!
Thou second part of life, that art a death,
Refitting for a newer start in life,
And nerving with a freshness all but me!

In vain I look upon the pensive night,
That hangs her silver crescent in the sky,

Gather'd on fleecy folds, that edge the blue
Of her vast, wild, pavilion'd canopy,
And keeps it, as a warrior doth his shield,
Unstain'd by dark device, or mortal dint,
And pure and spotless as a vestal's heart,
Upon the hour she gives herself to God!
There is no breath to waken up the leaf
That sits within my window—all is still—
And how oppressive grows that stillness now!
I cannot sleep. A spirit at my side,
Though, with the day's fatigue, my form is faint,
Keeps me from slumber. Thought, undying thought,
That dost pervade life's farthest wilderness,
Why may I not repose with those who take
These grateful slumbers? Wherefore, in my soul,
Still wouldst thou sound the silvery cord that trills
With hope of life—the sensible, true life
Of immortality and consciousness,
That is forever present to my dreams,
And bears me with a visible impulse on,
Spite of the rough adventure of the time,
The jostle of far-sighted emulation,
To look beyond myself, and fondly dare
Converse with high intelligence, and powers
Beyond man's frail existence!

Do the stars
Shine forth with fuller loveliness to me,
That thus I wake to watch them? Is the moon
Peculiar in her gaze to-night?—her smile
Sleeps on my very couch, and by my side—
And in the imperfect brightness of her glance,
Fantastic forms and shadows from her light
Glide through the chamber, and, with fancy's aid,

Grow human, and solicit me to speech.
And now, a silvery train is drawn afar,
Like a faint thread upon the utmost verge
Of the dun sky—as if it would unite
The earth I wake on, and the heaven I watch.
It is the star of my nativity—
What wonder I should wake to watch it then,
With a deep fixedness—a strong desire
To gather, from its seeming, all my hope—
Ambition's hope—far fitter gods than men—
Which lives unto the peril of the life
That is my mortal being—wearing away,
Consuming as a night-lamp, dim, untrimm'd,
The frame and sinews of the nerveless form
The forest boor had laugh'd at.—Lo! afar
It shoots along, and sheds in its lone flight,
A rich and tremulous lustre. Doth it wake,
In sympathy with me, alone among
Its starry train of rich intelligences,
As I, among my fellows of the earth—
Restless alike?—and should ambition dwell
So high above the mortal part of life?
Yet was it said, ere this, in ancient time,
When gods were on the earth, in guise of men,
And men, in action, rivall'd the high gods,
That 'twas the quality of heaven, and so
Became transmitted to the humbler race,
With whom they lightly mingled; and to whom
They gave such sad inheritance of pride—
High reaching, strong desire and boundless want,
Love of far rule, undying thirst of praise,
And power that never sleeps, but seeks for sway
Through peril, and foul circumstance and blood—
Heedless that pain and death are in the gift,

Though coupled with high honor!—fatal gift—
That saps the springs of life, of love, of peace,
Eats out the heart with a concealéd fire,
And leaves the desolate frame, self-blasted, thus,
By its own raging spirit overthrown,
Even on the summit of its towering hopes,
The vulture-tortured Titan on his rock!
Oh! what is fame, that I should darken youth—
The fresh attire of morning—the gay sun
Of my young destiny, that shone so fair—
With watching through the night—the sweet, long night
That fills my eyes with gentle drops to see—
Sweet though they flow from out the fount of tears,
Upon my heart, like dews upon the flower
In Hermon's valley! Doth to it belong,
Acknowledgment 'mong men, in words, whose tone,
Like music, offers to the moody soul,
Whose watchfulness is madness?—No, alas!—
Nor Time himself shall evermore retrieve
The life that I have lost! Yet, be this told,
In after years, when at my fireside blaze,
No chair shall be in waiting for my form,
No eye to smile at my unlook'd approach,
No welcome mine;—and from the mossy stone,
The imperfect characters which love hath traced,
Are trodden out by time—though he hath fail'd
To gain the planet's burning eminence,
With the high fires that he so oft hath watch'd,
The spirit was within him, and he strove,
Unqualified by base desire or deed,
Most nobly, though perchance he reach'd it not.

SONNETS.—RECOMPENSE.

I.

Not profitless the game, even when we lose,
Nor wanting in reward the thankless toil;
The wild adventure that the man pursues,
Requites him, though he gather not the spoil:
Strength follows labor, and its exercise
Brings independence, fearlessness of ill,—
Courage and pride,—all attributes we prize;—
Though their fruits fail, not the less precious still.
Though fame withholds the trophy of desire,
And men deny, and the impatient throng
Grow heedless, and the strains protracted, tire;—
Not wholly vain the minstrel and the song,
If, striving to arouse one heavenly tone
In others' hearts, it wakens up his own.

II.

And this, methinks, were no unseemly boast,
In him who thus records the experience
Of one, the humblest of that erring host,
Whose labors have been thought to need defence.
What though he reap no honors,—what though death
Rise terrible between him and the wreath,
That had been his reward, ere, in the dust,
He too is dust; yet hath he in his heart,
The happiest consciousness of what is just,
Sweet, true, and beautiful,—which will not part
From his possession. In this happy faith,
He knows that life is lovely—that all things
Are sacred—that the air is full of wings
Bent heavenward,—and that bliss is born of scath!

III.

And other lessons of humanity,
That fill the earth with blossoms—teach to feel
That man is better than he seems to be,
And he declares himself, and deeds reveal:
Not of good wholly fruitless was the tree
Whose fruit was death; and, from the crowd apart,
There beckons one, first-born of poesy,
A gentle power, that from his darkled eyes
Removes all scales, and sets the vision free,
And teaches mercy for the erring heart,
Not always wilful! We may naught despise
In God's creation! Erring we, not wise;—
Given up to passion,—hateful of the just,—
Prone to blind toils, strange follies, crime and dust.

SUMMER IN THE SOUTH.

Shines in mid-heaven the summer sun,
Green the gay robes which the woods have won,
And far aloft, o'er the snowy fleece,
Of clouds that brood in the realm of peace,
Spreads the great arch, with a deepening blue,
That meetly, with beauty, still bounds the view.
The swallow flits, with a joyous cry,
From the shadow'd eaves to the open sky,
And the vulture stoops, in his eager spring,
'Neath the sudden flash of his arrowy wing.
Oh, freed is the earth from her winter trance,
And the young Summer hath her inheritance;
The surly monarch of storm no more

Darkens the realm he ruled before;
His sceptre, where late he smote the wood,
Lord of the sombre solitude,
Broken, away in his fear he flies,
To the kindred glooms of his northern skies;
And a chirp and a song now cheer the hours,
And the very grave wears a robe of flowers.

She comes, the Summer so blessing, and Earth
Bounds, with a wing, to a better birth;
She breathes o'er the plain, and a thousand eyes
Open at once in a world of dyes;
Blue and purple, the buds unfold,
Happy and bright in their green and gold;
Daisies that speak for the virgin heart,
Lowly but sweet, by the path upstart;
And pinks that promise for hopes of youth,
Blossom with others that speak for truth.

How the enthusiast nature glows,
With that first bound from her long repose;
How, with a shout, she bids arise,
Her messenger-angels of earth and skies!
From height and dell, from brooklet and grove,
Forth they speed on their work of love;
Fanning the faint and warming the chill,
Doing the work of fondness still,
And, with the spells of each winning grace,
Giving new life in each warm embrace.

They come, they come, with the mother spell,
And the tribute children obey them well,
And gladden to hear the call that bids
Each drooping dear one unveil its lids.

The leaf grows green on the agéd trees,
And the blossom is wing'd by the wooing breeze;
The bird leaps free to the sun and air,
And in a new song forgets his care;
While the butterfly sports on his painted wing,
Having no duty to spin or to sing.

Oh, joyous freedom from hostile thrall,
That brings the blessing and bloom to all,
That, on rock and valley, and height, and plain,
Bestows the sun and the smile again;
That only breathes upon Winter's brow,
And breaks his fetters and melts his snow;
That smiles upon Autumn's wither'd bower,
And straightway it glories in fruit and flower,
And but whispers the sons of men, and they seem
Like children bless'd with a joyous dream.

Oh! the glad Summer, how bright her eye,
How sweet her breath, and how soft her sky,
How wondrous her magic power to bless
With the bloom of the garden the wilderness—
To crown the wild thorn with the golden flower,
To bathe the sad earth with the genial shower,
To foster the strength in the breast of Toil,
And hallow with bounty the niggard soil,
Glad the broad fields with the sunripe grain,
Till we dream of the age of Gold again!

HEART ESSENTIAL TO GENIUS.

We are not always equal to our fate,
Nor true to our conditions. Doubt and fear
Beset the bravest in their high career,
At moments when the soul, no more elate
With expectation, sinks beneath the time.
The masters have their weakness. "I would climb,"
Said Raleigh, gazing on the highest hill—
"But that I tremble with the fear to fall!"
Apt was the answer of the high-soul'd Queen,—
"If thy heart fail thee, never climb at all!"
The heart! if that be sound, confirms the rest,
Crowns genius with his lion will and mien,
And, from the conscious virtue in the breast,
To trembling nature gives both strength and will!

THE CAPTIVE.

I.

The Captive crouch'd in his dungeon,
On the floor the sunbeam lay;—
He crept the length of his fetter,
But the sunbeam flitted away:
"Ah! thus hath the cruel fortune
Still mock'd me," the Captive said;
"She came with her sunshine smiling,
But ere I could clasp her, fled.

II.

The Captive slept in his dungeon,
And a vision of visions spell'd
The sense of his sleeping sorrow,
The fairest he ever beheld;
A maid at the door stood smiling,
And she said—"Come hither to me;"
From his wrist his fetters crumbled,
And his feet and his soul were free.

III.

But with dawn the maiden vanish'd,
And lo! by the Captive stood
The form of the savage headsman,
With his axe still dripping blood:—
"Ah! now, indeed," said the Captive,
"The sense of the dream I see;
The maid was the angel of mercy,
And 'tis mercy that sets me free."

TWINS IN DEATH.

Shall the true faith, soaring high,
Dreaming still about the sky,
Weep the loved ones who have sought
What hath ever been our thought?—
Better, with a word of cheer,
Send our thoughts to follow, where
Thought 's no more a thing of care!—

Go, ye young twin-hearted,
Whom not even death has parted,

So well ye clung together;—
Ye are free the long campaign,
Marches in the cold and rain,
Hard fight and bitter weather.
Ye shall know no more of trembling,
Weep no more at man's dissembling,
Nor at griefs more dread,
In the cruel, sad defeat
Of the hope, of all most sweet
On which our hearts have fed;—
Fed—fed! as in the solitude
The Hebrew did upon celestial food!

Sweet your future slumbers, where
The young flowers, though soft and fair,
Hide no reptile, nurse no care,—
Where no shaft your hearts may sever!
Sweetest fate was yours,—to mingle
Souls that would unite forever,
Dreading ever to be single!—
God has bless'd your deep repose;
And the union so divine,
Hath a perfume like the rose,
That upon some mountain grows,
Where the clouds ascend not,
Which the tempests rend not,
Where stars of night and day, still twinn'd,
together shine.

Life can wing no after blow,
Ye are safe from mortal woe,
Ye have wings to fly the cloud,
Souls to fling aside the shroud;
Dreading never more the morrow,

With its brow of frown and sorrow;
Free from cruel time's oppressing,
Death himself but brings ye blessing.
Death who soothes even when he blights—
Where is he stern-hearted?—
Not when thus his hand unites
What never life had parted!
Ye have ceased your ailing,
There should be no wailing!

GLORY.

I.

'Tis thy first vision of glory;—
Lo! he is sleeping beside thee;
Sweet is the boy in his slumber;
Slumber more beautiful never
Curtain'd the lips of an infant,
Hung on his mouth like a zephyr,
Or from his lips drew a laughter,
Such as an angel might share in!—
Dark are his violet eyelids,
Soft with a tear dewy-glistening;
Red on his cheeks are the blossoms
Of youth and ineffable beauty;
And o'er his brow, how transcendent,
Bright with all colors, and glowing
Lovely as summer's first rainbow,
Circles the halo of heaven.

II.

Madden not, gazing upon him,—
Thus he but sleeps to beguile thee;—

Stoop not to kiss from his eyelid
Those pearly droplets that glisten
Gem-like, as tributes from ocean,
Cast on the gray sand and shining
Bright in the last glance of evening.—
Little thou dream'st of thy peril;—
Lo! where, conceal'd by the roses,
Grasp'd in his hand, and now quivering,
As eager to fly on its mission,
The subtle red shaft of the lightning!—
Look where his head finds its pillow,
Bolt upon bolt, that flash softly,
Tinging, with faintest suffusion,
The tresses of gold that half hide them.

III.

This is no child but an eagle,
Ready for flight with his burden,
Changing his aspect as quickly,
And reckless and stern as the Afrite,
Who, 'scaping from Solomon's signet,
Rose from his urn to a giant,
Stretching from ocean to heaven.
Waken him not in thy madness;—
Sore is the grief he will bring thee;
Hard is the task he will set thee;
Soon, with the daylight beginning,
Late, with the midnight unending;
Toils, that will make thee to weary,
Sinking to die by the wayside,
With an eye and a hand ever stretching
To the lone, unattainable summits.

BALLAD.—WHERE ART THOU?

Oh! where art thou, the dearest
Of all that boyhood knew;—
Oh! where art thou, still fairest
Of all to Memory's view?
Long years have swept above me,
Age silver'd o'er my brow,—
But, if thou live and love me—
Speak! Tell me! where art thou?

I've wander'd long—how lonely!
With one sweet passion fed,
That clung and cheer'd me only,
When other hopes had fled;
That thou, my own one, cherish'd
Still true thy youthful vow—
Alas! if it hath perish'd,—
And thou?—oh! where art thou?

I fled—I left thee weeping,
And bitter tears were mine,
That did not cease when sweeping,
In tempest, o'er the brine;
I saw thee then in vision,
As memory sees thee now,
And dream'd a dream Elysian;—
But where, alas! art thou!

And years of toil and sorrow,
And pain and fear were mine;
My heart could only borrow
Its hope from thoughts of thine:

I strove, that I might measure
The ocean waste, and now
I come to seek the treasure
Most loved,—and, where art thou?

And scenes of old rise brightly
Again on Memory's view;
'Tis boyhood's footstep, lightly
Trips o'er the fields it knew;
Such dreams of joyous childhood,
As lift my spirit now:—
There is the cot, the wildwood,
The hawthorn!—where art thou?

No welcome!—oh! the sorrow
That shuts yon evening skies!
Vain would they beauty borrow,
From false and fleeting dyes;
Soft blue,—carnation flushes,
In mingling tissues glow;
But sad the fear that rushes
Upon me!—where art thou?

Such silence! oh! the feeling
Of dread that chills my heart!
Even at my footfall, stealing
O'er grassy slopes, I start;
Thy voice was full of greeting,
Why is it silent now?
Thou still wast first at meeting—
Oh! Mary, where art thou?

The porch! around its column,
Thou bad'st the creeper twine,

And, with the green made solemn,
Thy windows wreathed in vine;
Pots, fill'd with purple flowers,
Stood on long shelves below,—
They're gone—the buds, the bowers,—
All! all! and where art thou?

And yet, the hearth is blazing,
As it was wont to burn,
When through thy lattice gazing,
Thou'st watch'd for my return;
I see, or am I dreaming?
Thou'rt at the window now!—
'Tis but the sun's last gleaming—
'Tis gone—oh! where art thou?

I lift the latch!—thy father
Sits in the ancient chair—
Oh! tears, how thick they gather,
I scarce can see him there;—
Thy mother! wildly wringing
Her hands, beholds me now,
Fast to the window clinging,
She sinks—oh! where art thou?

FANCY.

Would you win from fancy power?—
Woo her in the witching hour,
When the drooping sun retires,
And the moon with softer fires
Soothes with dew the drooping flower!

She is free when evening closes,
Fondly veiling summer's roses,
To pursue, with noiseless flying,
As the breeze of ocean sighing,
Seeks where zephyr still reposes.

Lo! you trace her airy motion
In the woods and o'er the ocean,—
By the wing in tree-top whirring,
By the zephyr sudden stirring,
By the little lake's commotion.

Earth grows fragrant in her power,—
'Tis from her she wins her dower;
Sigh for sunset, gleam for alley,
Flush for grove, and voice for valley,
Scent for sun, and beam for flower.

SONNETS.—SPIRIT-FLIGHTS.

I.

Ah me! that sleeping like Endymion,
Upon a gentle hill-slope flower bestrewn,
I could be laid to wait the coming moon,
And her fresh smile, as some rich garment, don!
Let the winds gather round me, and the dell,
That breaks into the valley catch the sound,
And, with its many voices, speed around
The airy rapture, till the natural spell
Rouse up the wood-nymphs to delight my sleep;

While she, my mistress, from her ocean cell,
Ascends to the blue summits, with a swell
Of those sweet noises from the caverns deep,
Where blue-eyed Nereids sport on ocean's shell,
And to old Triton's conch, in long procession sweep.

II.

Upon the poet's soul they flash forever,
In evening shades, these glimpses strange and sweet;
They fill his heart betimes—they leave him never,
And haunt his steps with sounds of falling feet:
He walks beside a mystery night and day;
Still wanders where the sacred spring is hidden;
Yet, would he take the seal from the forbidden,
Then must he work and watch, as well as pray!
How work? How watch? Beside him—in his way,—
Springs, without check, the flower, by whose choice spell,—
More potent than "herb moly,"—he can tell
Where the stream rises and the waters play!—
Ah! spirits call'd avail not! On his eyes,
Seal'd up with stubborn clay, the darkness lies.

YES, LONE WERE MY BOSOM.

Yes, lone were my bosom if liken'd to thine,
And base were my soul if it knelt at thy shrine;
And the heaven we worship were false if it be
More true to the spoiler than thou wert to me.

If the hope that has cheer'd me through danger and death,
Be as easily lost as its owner's frail breath,

Then 'twere meet that my heart in its conflict should fly,
To the succor of him who decrees it to die.

If my hope of the future, as they tell me, be vain,
Thy lures shall not win me to trust it again ;
And the evening of life were but anguish to me,
Did I deem its sad sunlight vouchsafed me by thee.

Thou mayst rule o'er the slaves whom thy fortune has made ;
I am none, and by me thou canst ne'er be betray'd :
I call for no curse on thy head but the one,
To trust with my trust, and, like me, be undone.

SONNET.—AIMS.

There have been earnest fancies in my soul,
A wilder summons,—deeper cares than these,
That now possess my spirit and control,
Subduing me to forests and green trees.
Thoughts have assail'd me in my solitude,
Of human struggle!—and within mine ear,
Still and anon, a whispering voice I hear,
That mocks me with my feebleness of mood ;
The puny toil of song—the idle dance
Of metaphor, and shadows of romance!
Points to superior struggle—paints the cares
Of Empire,—the great nation in the toils
Of impotence, that still in blindness dares,
And what it cannot elevate, despoils.

CHANGES OF HOME.

I.

Well may we sing her beauties, this pleasant land of ours,
Her sunny smiles, her golden fruits, and all her world of flowers;
The young birds of her forest groves, the blue folds of her sky,
And all those airs of gentleness that never seem to fly:
They wind about our forms at noon, they woo us in the shade,
When panting, from the summer heats, the woodman seeks the glade;
They win us with a song of love, they cheer us with a dream,
That gilds our passing thoughts of life, as sunlight doth the stream;
And well would they persuade us now, in moments all too dear,
That, sinful though our hearts may be, we have our Eden here.

II.

Ah! well has lavish nature, from out her boundless store,
Spread wealth and loveliness around, on river, rock and shore:
No sweeter stream than Ashley glides—and, what of southern France?—
She boasts no brighter fields than ours within her matron glance;
Our skies look down in tenderness from out their realms of blue,
The fairest of Italian climes may claim no softer hue;
And let them sing of fruits of Spain, and let them boast the flowers,
The Moors' own culture, they may claim no dearer sweet than ours—
Perchance the dark-hair'd maiden is a glory in your eye,
But the blue-eyed Carolinian rules, when all the rest are nigh.

III.

And none may say, it is not true, the burden of my lay,
'Tis written still in song and sweet, in flower and fruit and ray;

Look on the scene around us now, and say if sung amiss,
The lay that pictures to your eye a spot so fair as this :
Gay springs the merry mock-bird around the cottage pale,—
And, scarcely taught by hunter's aim, the rabbit down the vale ;
Each boon of kindly nature —her buds, her blooms, her flowers,
And, more than all, the maidens fair, that fill this land of ours,
Are still in rich perfection, as our fathers found them first,
But our sons are gentle now no more and all the land is curst.

IV.

Wild thoughts are in our bosoms and a savage discontent,
We love no more the life we led, the music, nor the scent ;
The merry dance delights us not, as in that better time,
When glad, in happy bands we met, with spirits like our clime ;
And all the social loveliness, and all the smile is gone
That link'd the spirits of our youth, and made our people one ;
They smile no more together as in that earlier day,
Our maidens sigh in loneliness who once were always gay ;
And though our skies are bright, and our sun looks down as then,
Ah me! the thought is sad I feel, we shall never smile again.

THE FOREST GRAVE.

But little heeding where I laid me down,—
For I was worn to weariness by toil
Of a long day of travel in the sun ;
I threw myself beneath the thicket's shade,
'Mongst the long grasses of a gentle slope,
And slept unconscious. At my waking, said
My father, who had sate and watch'd the while,
"Thou little know'st what couch hath given thee rest,

Or what thy pillow!" Then I look'd, and found
My form had rested on a Christian grave,
The mouldering cross of wood, beneath mine arm,
Drawn easily down, by motion of my hand,
From its old station at the hillock's head.

"Thou marvell'st," said he, "at a Christian grave,
Here, in this heathen wilderness;—but where
Plants not the foe his trophies? All the earth
Is but Death's garden, where he drills and sows,
That God may find the reapers in his time.
He follows not his craft alone where crowds
Gather for living purposes,—where Pride
Erects his idle palace; and the route
Of Folly, school'd against austerity,
As having not the soul for sad delights,
Meet in licentious revel. But even here,
Where the deer stalk in safety, and the wild,
Unrifled of its rich virginity,
Is glad with simple nature, as at first,
Here, Death hath rear'd his melancholy shrine,
And the slight hillock which hath made thy couch,
Gives proof that he hath claim'd his sacrifice,
Relentless in pursuit as fell in power,
And monarch equally o'er time and place,
The wilderness as city, poor as proud,
Hath bade life render up his trembling staff,
And, like some outlaw, reckless of accompt,
Hath eased him of his burden.

"Shall we ask—
What were thy fortunes, sleeper?—In what part,
Native or foreign, of earth's wilderness,
Didst thou begin thy journey? Was thy life,

Honor'd by gifts of goodness—smear'd by guilt—
Baffled by fortune—hard beset with foes;
Or, cast away in thine own recklessness,
By profligate waste of days?

"All in vain,
This idle quest—yet not to virtue vain,
If, from thy grave, an upward voice might rise,
To give us answer. Nothing may we know
From thy seal'd lips and silent dwelling-place!—
My own blood may have circled in thy heart,
Yet know I naught of thee, and cannot know.

"Yet may the general aspect of thy lot
Be traced in this thy sepulchre! Thy thought
Was one that kept thee sleepless. Thou hast hoped,
With an unyielding, vexing discontent,
For wealth and honors; those delusive gauds,
That dazzle the best eyes, and still defeat
The wisest aims of greatness!—or hast sinned
Beyond forgiveness of thy fellow. God,
The prince of infinite power, if thou hast pray'd,
Will grant what man denied thee. Thou hast striven
Against thy neighbor's greatness. Thou hast dared
Be bold against him, when the power was his
To crush thee with a finger. Thou hast fled
His keen pursuit of vengeance, and the doom
Of exile hath been writ against thy name,
Being thy moral death:—the rest is here!

"I read the story of thy folly here—
Thy folly in thy fortunes. Thou hast wrong'd
Thy fellow, in denying him thy trust!—
Thy nature ask'd for confidence—its laws

Commanded thy dependence. Thou wast bade
Be humble in thine aim, and love thy kind,
Even when it wrong'd thee. Hast thou yielded love,
Or trust, to him that sought it? Didst thou yield
Meet deference to thy betters—to the wise,
Having the nation's rule? Or didst thou shake
Thy bold hand in defiance, and depart,
Calling down vengeance in red bolts from heaven.
To do thee justice in consuming flame?
Would thou couldst answer! It may be, thy tale
Were of the world's injustice—the worse wrong,
That of the many striving 'gainst the one.
Thou couldst unfold a grievance which should bring
A pang to hearts of honor—a cold sweat
On brows, that feel thy argument was theirs—
Thy cause, the cause of freedom. He who stands,
As I, above thy forest-shelter'd sleep,
May read a story in thy dwelling-place.
Thy steps were from thy home of many hours,
From time of youth's first blossoming. Thy grief—
The grief which stretch'd thee on the bed of death—
Came with thy exile. Thou wast banish'd all—
And death that met thee, was a comforter,
To guide thee to a dwelling, and prepare
A couch, and give thee shelter from the night,
Fast coming on, and storm that follow'd close—
Pursuing thee as still the storm pursues
The banish'd and unfriended. Thou hast sunk
To thy last sleep, untroubled by the cares
That throng about the city bed of death—
No idle tramp of men hath follow'd thee;
A hurried hand—perchance a thoughtless heart—
Hath scoop'd thee out a grave some three feet deep,
And left thee in the solitude to God!

"The heart hath better hopes. Humanity
Springs up beside the pathway, like a flower
That takes the blankness from the wilderness,
And sweetens its bleak waters. I have hope
Thou wert not all untended at the last.
Some hand hath smooth'd thy pillow when disease
Kept thee awake through the long dreary night.
Thy birth had friends and parents. Childhood came,
And brought with it a livelier fellowship;
And boyhood gave thee sympathy and sport.
And were there none of all thy fellowships—
Was there no parent in thy last sad hour,
Nor she thou lov'dst in childhood—nor the boy,
Who mated out with thee in roguish play,
The measure of thy laughing pranks erewhile,
Beside thee, when thou groan'dst in agony?
And, in the trying moment, when earth reel'd
Around thee, and the skies began to fade,
And darkness fill'd thy chamber, and gaunt death
Dragged thee about and wrestled with thy frame,
Already overborne—and hurl'd thee down
Never to rise—was it a friend long tried
Who decently composed thy stiffen'd limbs,
And spread thy pall above thee; or strange men
Whom thou hadst never seen, and couldst not see,
To whom thy fortune, most unnatural,
Gave up this mournful office? Did they take
Thy frame, and scooping out a shallow bed,
That gave thee scarce a shelter from the rain,
Consign thee, with a word, unto thy tomb—
With vague conjecture scanning all the while
Thy hopes, thy fortune and thy loneliness?
Had all deserted thee that loved before?
Or was it that thou, in wilfulness of mood,

Self-banish'd, fled the many who had loved,
Deplore thy error still and weep thy loss?
Did none come near to give thee medicine,
Or smooth thy pillow down, support thy head,
Watch by thy midnight couch, and still attend,
With that officious tenderness and zeal,
Which makes the patient smile through every pang,
And bless the malady, however deep,
That brings along with it such pleasant cares?

"And all that infancy and boyhood brought—
Mother and mistress—schoolmate, brother, friend—
Thy fortune took from thee, when most their cares
Had sweeten'd all thy sorrows! Such was not
Thy feeling, when in manhood's health and strength,
Thou fled'st from the great city, with a pride
That made thy errors look like nobleness,
And kept thee in them. In that hour of death,
Feeble and prostrate, what a mockery seem'd
That spirit-exulting, which had led thee forth
Into self-written exile! Thy faint heart
Pray'd then for that humility—that hope—
Thou didst reject in thy vain hour of strength;
And thou hadst given the torturing pride of years,
That fed upon thy heart, and all its hopes,
For one poor hour of love—for those sweet smiles
Of her whose heart look'd out from tearful eyes,
Still hoping for thy soon return, yet sad,
As with a mournful presage of thy fate.

"That fate, perchance, she shared. She fled with thee,
Blind to thy errors, to thy vices blind,
Flying from all beside, and glad to own
A dwelling in thy heart—a lone abode,

Where thou couldst love her. Thou didst build her cot
Beside yon thicket, near yon rippling brook,
And rear'd the jasmine round her cottage door,
And train'd the wild vine o'er it. Thou wast blest,
Deep in the forest, happy in the all,
Rich in the little spoil thou robb'dst from man.

"And where is she? Thy dwelling-place is lone,
The cot in ruins, and the tangled vine
A thicket where the yellow serpent lurks,
And the green lizard glides. Where is the bird
That made thy cottage beautiful—that sooth'd
The desert to thine eye, and fill'd thy heart
With such abundance of her treasured sweet,
That man's hate grew forgotten in her love?

"She did not perish when she saw thee die,
Else had they made her grave where thou art laid,
And that were merciful. No flower is here
Which she hath planted; and the weeds have grown,
Untended, like thy fortunes, thorny and wild,
Meet emblem of thy fate. Methinks,
If there was nothing sweet to bless thy days,—
If youth had no enjoyment—childhood no friend—
Manhood no home—the love of country naught,
To make a venerated shrine a charm,
More sweet to age than all the joys of youth—
If but affliction clung to thee through all—
It had not been a misplaced charity
Of her, or the sad seasons, to have left
One flower above thy grave, poor desolate!"

THOU HAST EYES LIKE STARS.

I.

Thou hast eyes like stars, and sweetness
Which no fruit of earth supplies;
Thou hast airy grace and fleetness,
Like some bird of upper skies;—
Let not earthly charms go higher
Than the ones which should aspire;—
Be thy spirit like thine eyes—
Brightest bounty to them given,
Clothe that too in gifts of heaven.

II.

Bid it bless where now it kindles,
Let not mocking spirits say,
That thy holy beauty dwindles
To a common earthly ray;—
Be the wicked speech confounded,
Take the captive thou hast wounded,
Prove that eyes that so can slay,
Have an attribute the more,
When the stricken they restore.

"LA BOLSA DE LAS SIERRAS."

"La Bolsa de las Sierras,"—the Pocket or Pouch of the Mountains,—is the fanciful title given by the Spaniards to a very picturesque and lovely spot in Texas,—the terminus of the ocean-reach, stretching up towards San Antonio, the mines of San Saba, Chihuahua, and the Rocky Mountains. The scene is one of the rarest loveliness. The meadows are clothed with flowers even in February. The waters spread away among groves that relieve the prospect with a constant variety. Here come, wandering along the margin of lakes and waters, that lose themselves amidst the rich grasses of the slopes, the most wonderful flocks of the flamingo and the swan. But the verses must do the work of description.

Peace woos us here with flowers;—
Peace in the solitude, where Nature still
Looks unpolluted forth from mountain towers,
And takes no shape of ill;
Where, fleet through vales that sleep in lakes below,
The deer leaps free in herds and never dreads the foe.

The swan speeds wild in grace,
Through the sweet lakes that freshen all the vale;
A meadowy sea, far as the eye may trace,
Ripples beneath the trade-wind's soothing gale;
Here woods and groves that never lose their green,
Fringe the fair streams, and crown the heights between.

The gay flamingo there,
Marching with crest erect and footsteps slow,
Looks down to watch his form in waters clear,
Nor heeds the trooping flocks that come and go;
Legions of white-wing'd innocents, that glide,
Or dart, with sense of joy, and mirth, that sweetens pride.

Pensive, the palms arise,
As if o'er cherish'd graves; the mezquite towers

Through the dense chapparal; a thousand dyes
Blend sweetly, and the aroma of the flowers
From thousand shrubs, by ocean zephyrs fann'd,
With music borne afar, makes grateful all the land.

With never-dying song,
The glad winds gather through the blossoming day,
Like truants still, their sportive play prolong,
Forgetful in their pleasures that they stray;
While in the sky the flecking clouds lie calm,
White, soft, as drinking glad from skies below their balm.

Peace! Peace!—the sad heart's cry,
That blossom of security, here finds
Meet echo,—and with voices never high,
Yet absolute in their sweetness, blends and binds
With natural metes her empire, soft as wild,
Takes from the innocent fear, weds rapture to the mild.

Peace! Peace! the peace of Love,
Serene and sure in favor of the skies,—
Waters that lend their voices to the grove,
Groves singing back to waters;—grateful eyes,
From each, that kindle in requited fires,
Blest in the embrace of sanctified desires—

Commerce of kindred things,
Whose instincts find communion and rejoice,
With all that being ever circling brings,—
Each with its power to bless, and each with voice.
To answer for the blessing, and requite
The giver in happy song of ever-wing'd delight.

How swells the common strain;
The day-star waking ocean; the gay breeze

That welcomes still the brightness back again,
Skirrs the white beach, and skims among the trees,
Yet whispers to the sea-shell on the shore,
Which thenceforth aye repeats the sweet song o'er and o'er!

Oh! voices of delight,
Wings of my joy, and blossoming stars that gleam,
With still a present fondness for the sight,
That once has gloried in celestial dream;
Here still ye find each dear dismember'd part,
That in youth's first fresh fancies bless'd its heart.

The peace that harbors here
Is that of the soul's infancy,—when first,
Untroubled with to-morrow-haunting fear,
The young affections into blossom burst,
And found in breeze and sky, and earth and sea,
Realms sacred—homes and haunts where Love goes singing free.

Enough for happiness
Is here—where beauty harbors in the shade,
And asks but privilege to tend and bless,
To come in beams and blossoming charms array'd,
And soothe to slumberous sweetness with a strain,
Once heard, that never leaves the happy heart again.

One heart shall grow to mine,
Here in the holy wilderness—shall share
All its sweet treasures, and the peace divine,
That robs the precious rapture of its fear;
Nor sigh for that the mountain in its breast
Holds—which, with lure of hell, would rob our hearts of rest.

Love thus, at last, shall crown
The warfare of long seasons. Born of peace,

She will bring soothing. We shall both lie down
Beneath the slender palm, and feel the increase
That fruitfully belongs to natural joys,
Meet toils, pure thoughts and hopes, delight that never cloys.

SONG IN MARCH.

I.

Now are the winds about us in their glee,
Tossing the slender tree;
Whirling the sands about his furious car,
March cometh from afar;
Breaks the seal'd magic of old winter's dreams,
And rends his glassy streams;
Chafing with potent airs, he fiercely takes
Their fetters from the lakes,
And, with a power by queenly Spring supplied,
Wakens the slumbering tide.

II.

With a wild love he seeks young Summer's charms
And clasps her to his arms;
Lifting his shield between, he drives away
Old Winter from his prey;—
The ancient tyrant whom he boldly braves,
Goes howling to his caves;
And, to his northern realm compell'd to fly,
Yields up the victory;
Melted are all his bands, o'erthrown his towers,
And March comes bringing flowers.

SONNETS.

I. FAERY GLIMPSES.

The spirits that do dress the flowers with dew,
And trip it on the greensward, by the moon,
And play fantastic tricks, both late and soon,
When March with blossoms promises the Spring,—
Have been about me in the merriest ring.
Methought among their forms were some I knew.
They came with hushing laughter,—for I slept
Beneath our willows—slily round me crept,
And prankt my brow with blossoms,—in my ear
Whisper'd the wildest dreams of elfin land,
Then, in a circle, dancing hand in hand,
Sung me a ditty from the Moon's own sphere:—
Starting from slumber, in the dear delight
Of such a vision, it was gone from sight.

II. CHILD FANCIES.

A plague upon your knowledge—books and laws,
Sciences, theories, and doctrines cold,
Maxims and principles, and rules, and saws,
That, propagating nothing, from the old,
Lop off their generations!—Where are now
Those fancies rare, those superstitions wild,
That kept the heart, in wonders, still a child;—
That taught the mind to dream, the soul to glow—
That peopled air with glories—fill'd the mine
With its inhabitants,—fiery-mailéd forms,
That, traversing earth's avenues in swarms,
Met Oberon's light legions, line for line?
Give me these visions of my youth—restore
Its youth, which dwelt in such as these, once more.

MORNING IN THE FOREST.

I.

The voices of the forest! Hear the tale
Whisper'd, at moments, by the fitful breeze,
That sighing, with a sad but soothing wail,
Makes sweetest music with the tall old trees;
And blends, with feeling of the dawning hour,
Musings of solemn thought and saddest power.

II.

Such was the birth, the mother-birth, which sung
The morning of creation:—even so strange,
The first, fresh accents of the infant tongue
Of nature, moaning through her varied range—
Wild in her desert loneliness of place,
Ere yet she knew her last and noblest race.

III.

Thus moan'd the winds among the giant trees,
That had no other homage—thus, from far,
Came the deep voices of the sullen seas,
Striving 'gainst earth, and with themselves at war;—
Night craved the sun, and chaos from her keep
Groan'd with the oppression of her sightless sleep.

IV.

And, in the language of their infant lack,
They tell their story with each rising dawn;
You hear them when the hour is cold and black,
Ere yet the feet of day imprint the lawn;
When the faint streakings of the light are seen,
O'er eastern heights, through darkest groves of green.

V.

Each day renews the birth of thousand days,
Even from the dawn of time :—even now I see,
Amid the gloom that gathers on my gaze,
Gray distant gleams that shoot up momently—
And hark! a sudden voice—the voice of might,
That hail'd, from infant life, the blessing birth of light.

VI.

The morning grows around me! Shafts of gray,
Like sudden arrows from the eastern bow,
Rise, through the distant forests, to a ray,
And light the heavens, and waken earth below ;—
The rill that murmur'd sadly, now sings out,
Leaping, through trembling leaves, with free and gladsome shout.

VII.

I see a glitter on yon glossy leaf,
Where hangs a silent dew-drop. Hark! a bird
Shrieks out, as if he felt some sudden grief,
His sleep, perchance, by dream of danger stirr'd :
Wings rustle in the thicket—other eyes
Behold, where, ray on ray, the wings of morning rise.

VIII.

And now the dawn, with eye of glancing gray,
Comes singing into sight. The trees stand forth,
As singly striving for her brightest ray ;
And, countless voices, from the awakening earth,
Clamor full-throated joys :—a flapping wing
Prepares, in yonder copse, to take his morning spring.

IX.

A sudden life is round me with the light,
Voices and wings are in the woods and air ;

Broad vistas open to my travelling sight,
And hills arise, and valleys wondrous fair—
Even while I gaze, a sudden shaft of fire
Makes yon tall pine blaze up, like some proud city spire.

X.

Oh, beautiful! most beautiful! the things
I see around me;—lovelier still to thought,
The fancies, welling from a thousand springs,
The presence of these images hath brought;
The visions of the past are mine this hour,
And, in my heart, the pride of an o'ermastering power—

XI.

A power that could create, and from the dead
Draw life and gather accents. There are spells,
Known to the unerring thought, which freely shed
Light round the groping footstep, when rebels
The o'ercautious reason, and the instinct fear
Shrinks from its own huge shadow—they are here!

XII.

This is a spot—if there have ever been,
As ancient story tells, in legends sooth,
Such forms as are not earthly, earthward seen,
Having strange shapes of beauty and of youth—
Then do I ween that this should be the spot
Where they should come,—and yet I see them not.

XIII.

Yet have I pray'd their presence with a tongue
Of song, and a warm fancy that could take,
From many-voiced expression as she sung,
Her wingéd words of music, and awake

True echoes of her strain to win my quest,
And woo the coming of each spirit-guest.

XIV.

Yet did they come not, though my willing thought
Grew captive to my wild and vain desire;
And in my heart meet pliancy was wrought,
To raise the forms, in seeming, I require;—
And in this truant worship I've bow'd down,
Since first night's shadows fell and made the forests brown.

XV.

And sure no fitter spot had spirit sought,
For the soft-falling of star-pacing feet;
This is the holiest wood, with flowers inwrought,
Having fresh odors of most heavenly sweet;
Nor in the daylight's coming, then, do these
Cathedral shadows fly, that lurk behind the trees.

XVI.

The wild beast burrows not beneath our hill,
Nor hide these leaves one serpent. Gentlest doves
Brood in the pines at evening, seldom still,
With murmur through the night, of innocent loves:
And I have shaken, with no boyish trust,
From my own human feet, the base and selfish dust.

XVII.

And fancy hath been with me, to beguile
The stubborn reason into faith, and show
The subtle shapes from fairy-land, that while,
In gamesome dance, the wasted hours below;
Meet lawn of green and purple here is spread,
By nature's liberal hand for fay's fantastic tread.

XVIII.

And memories of old song, the solemn strains
Of bards, that gave themselves to holiest thought,
And gloried in their wild, poetic pains,
Were in my heart; and my rapt soul was fraught
With faith in what they feign'd, until my blood
Grew tremulously strong beneath my hopeful mood.

XIX.

And when the dark hours came, the twining stars
Seem'd eyes, that darted on me keenest fires;
Earth had her voice, and promised, through her bars,
To burst the bondage set on free desires—
And not a breath that stirr'd the flowers, but seem'd
The shadowy whisper from some shape I dream'd.

XX.

Yet vainly have I waited!—not in vain!
What though no fairy won me with her song,
And beckoning finger—'twas a nobler strain
That struck the ear of thought, and fill'd it long:
A mightier presence yet my soul o'erawed—
He was beside me;—I had been with God!

REPININGS.

"My brother!" said before me a sweet maid,
Who look'd a sister's feeling from her eye,
And thereupon I wept;—for I had none,
Brother nor sister—and my way of life
Hath been among the hills, and where the waste,

Sandy, and like the ocean-plane spread out,
Pains the sick eye with gazing. I, alas!
Have known no brother's, felt no sister's love,
Drank fondly of no blessings, such as make
A cottage fireside seem a home like heaven,
Where all is peace and truth. Yet less I've sought
Of love, than of permission but to love,—
The right to choose, from out the hurrying crowd,
My thing of worship. I have none to love—
None for whose single good my heart may hope—
None for whose choice delight my form may rove,
Bringing home dear enjoyments. Mine hath been
The life of want that sister had supplied—
The other self,—most sweet, most singular,
To whom, as to an altar of high thought,
My heart, when otherwise denied, might turn,
Secure of comfort. You may hold it weak
That thus I wept, hearing that maiden call
The youth who stood beside her. Worlds had I given
Had she but call'd me thus. Had she but placed
Her arm upon my own,—look'd in my face
With that dear smile of confidence, and said
"My brother," I had proudly made her thence
My deity, and she had fill'd my heart,
Its soul and sovereign thence, for evermore!

WONDERS OF THE SEA.

A FRAGMENT.

What I have brought thee is a mystery,
Framed by a wondrous artist—of the sea,—
Of the green mansions, and the sparry caves,
The shells, the sea-maids, and the warring waves;

And stirring dangers ;—of the fearful things,
Monstrous and savage, that, from secret springs,
Course, in pursuit of prey ; and, all night long,
Keep wakeful but to hear the tempest's song,
And join in terrible chorus !—Would you hear ?
Then let your breath be hush'd, and bend your ear,
For he that made it hath the wizard's power,
To call up images that shriek and lower,
From hidden caves, and graves, and dens afar ;
His sovereign art commands them, and they are !

IMAGINATION.

I.

He is a god who wills it,—with a power
To work his purpose out in earth and air,
Though neither speak him fair !—
So may he pluck from earth its precious flower,
And in the ether choose a spirit rare,
To serve him deftly in some other sphere ;—
And thus it is that I have will'd this hour,
And thou hast heard me, and thy form is here !

II.

Creature of wing and eye,
That, singing, seek'st the sky,
And soar'st because thou sing'st, and singing, still must fly ;
Believe me, though I know not mine own voice,
I see thee, and before thee I rejoice ;
Thou, precious in both worlds, with thy sole choice
In ours, I bless thee that I knew thee first,

Ere, in the dawn of mortal joys, my heart,
Low-fashion'd by its fond caprice and art,
Had been for thy blest offices accurst;—
Denied the commerce of thy griefs, which bring
The wholesome of Love's sweetness with the sting;—
The love which Sin hath nurst,—
But nursing, could not keep,—
Soothed by delicious dews, the soul that steep,
And circumvent the wing!—
Oh! thou hast heard me;—heard me and com'st down,
Amid the silence and the shade, a gleam;
I see the glimmer of thy golden crown,
I feel thy wing in murmur, and I dream—
Dream of thy pleasant provinces, which lie
Still open to the conqueror, who, no more
May rifle, than resist, thy precious store,
Which grows, the more he spoils, the more beneath his eye!

III.

Oh! thou hast heard me with no jealous grace,—
Hast heard me, and approv'st the daring quest,
Which, heedless of this lowliness of place,
Would build thee here a shrine,—and, to my breast,
Implore thee, that I may be lifted high
To thy vast realms, that still entreat mine eye,
Shining through fields of vision, by the star,
Most sacred, which, at evening and at dawn,
First comes to teach us where the bright ones are,
Each, in his place, upon the heavenly lawn;—
All open to thy wing, that, dusk and day,
Descend'st and risest,—lifting, at each flight,
Some hopeful spirit, that, beneath thy ray,
Grows fitted to a world of more delight!—
Oh! not for thee to censure lowliness,

Save in the soul; which, grovelling as it goes,
Sees not the bright wings that descend to bless,
And will not seek where the true fountain flows!
And he whom man denies,
Hath but to lift his eyes,
Touch'd by thy breath, fresh-parted from the skies,
And the walls tumble outward that did bound,
And, skyward, the blue deepens; and, in air,
A flutter of the happiest wings is found,
Diffusing sweets that earth still finds too rare;—
And faith takes both her wings—
Will, that o'er mortal things
Still sways, as doth the wand o'er hidden springs;
And Love, that, in her trust,
Holds empire over dust,
And lifts to very life the soul to which she clings!
These grow to freedom with thy downward flight,
While the gross earth, bedarken'd in the bright,
That kindles on his sight,
Feels all its pomps grow naught,
Subject to that great thought,
Borne on thy matchless plumes, by which the soul is taught.

IV.

I know my undeserving—know how vain
The poor equivalent of love I bring,
And yet once more I do solicit thee;—
Again! oh! yet again!
Sit by me as thou didst, my beautiful!
When life was but a blossom of the spring,
And thou its zephyr—sit by me and sing,
Thy voice of tears will medicine the gloom
That hangs about my spirit, and set free
That bird of faith that only finds its wing

In thy melodious coming. Chase away
These threatening shapes that cloud my lonely room,
And wrap me in their moody grasp all day!
Come,—for thou only canst,—oh! come and lull,
With the sweet reedy music of thy tone,
The weary spirit left too much alone
By the gay strollers of this idle time;
Yet, deem me not irreverent when I ask!—
With thee, the creature of the wing and eye,—
A bird-flight not a task!—
'Twere easy to adjure, from stars sublime,
Such mighty sorrows, as, through these old walls,
Would leave a thousand echoes gushing free;—
At every trailing of a spirit's train,
Recalling still that strain,
That woke me to thy presence first, when far
Led by a single star,
And following in the wake of fancies sweet,
I wander'd deep into the mountain halls,
And ever, through the flashes of the storm,
Beheld a flitting form;
And heard, when winds grew hush'd, the sounds of falling feet!

V.

I know, with various wing, that thou canst soar
To realms that know no sorrow—that thy flight
Can waft thee to vain regions of delight,
Where wings may rather wanton than explore;—
But not to provinces like these I pray
Thy pinions; nor for me that idle lore,
That only seeks to wile, or win, by art,
The vigilant hours that watch through the long day;—
Those foolish madrigals that chase away,
As old men laugh, time's wrinkles;—the vain joke

That shakes the theatre, while, for the nonce,
The buffoon triumphs in the sage's cloak,
And wisdom, all forgetful of his part,
Grows heedless of the white upon his sconce,
Nor deafens as he shakes his borrow'd bells!—
Nor should you win me when the drama tells
The sportive passions of that wayward god,
Who, riding Libya's lion, yet with craft,
Still wings his wanton shaft,
Subduing mightiest spirits into shame;
Till lowlier men grow scornful of the fame,
That took the name of glory, ere the sport
Of that boy-archer shook their high report!—
As Love is in thy office, let the strain,
That teaches me his affluence, be implored
From the full heart and the sincerest thought;—
As if the captive thus had been restored
To passions of great pride and purest gain,—
Such as, by truth made plain,
Had never partaken of the pernicious fruit
That held the reptile in its core, and brought
Caprice, that ever must the soul imbrute!
Bring me to knowledge of that nobler flame
That never clouds with shame;
That freely may declare its aim and birth,
Nor glow, all doubtful of its proper name,
Impure, unhallow'd, on the hallow'd hearth!
Mine be the creature of a faith that brooks
No fashioning art or offices of man;
But, for its laws and properties, still looks
To the true purpose, first in nature's plan,
Decreed, ere rolling spheres and twinkling orbs began.

VI.

Thine is the night, the cloud, the lone, the far;
Thou bring'st to eve her star:
The cloud from thee receives its wing for flight,
And, clothed in purple light,
Goes sailing, richly freighted, to the sea!—
And thou hast cheer'd the solitude for me;—
Hast borne me, when the fetters of earth had worn
Into the soul its scorpion lash had torn,—
Borne me, triumphant, from my lonely cell,
To freedom, in far empires of the night;—
The freedom of the rugged mountain's height;
The strange companions of the haunted dell;
Great fields of blue, star-lighted,—while the cloud
Lay mantling o'er the city like a shroud,
And all behind was sad, and all before was bright!
Long vistas of the wood were wooing,—gay,
Sprinkt with the droplets which the sun had left,
Fast hurrying, having loiter'd on his way;—
These, in green thick close hid, and rocky cleft,
Made rich the solemn shadows of the wood;
So that the pilgrim, consciously astray,
Might wander still, since all around was good.
Thus night is in thy keeping! Thou alone
Canst take the veil from off her matron brow,
And bid the dreamer gladden in her sight.
Thou mak'st the secrets of her mansion known,
Her mansion, gloomy with excess of bright;—
And, from its wealth, surpassing mortal show,
The starr'd luxuriance of her pillar'd throne,
Thou canst extort her music—a lament,
As if the stars and winds together made
A requiem o'er the glories that must fade,—
Such as might issue, on a god's descent

From some high sphere his presence once had sway'd.
'Tis thine to put a soul into this train,
While earth is sleeping—blasted from her birth
Into unmusical barrenness and dearth,
Such as might move her ne'er to wake again,
Did it not pleasure her vain pride to spoil,
With keen and clamorous coil,
The delicate labors of our secret toil,
To break upon the midnight watch we keep—
Forgetting sleep,
Here, charming night and silence from the deep,
Stars stooping round us ever as they shine,
While wings, from off thy shoulders, grow to mine.

'TIS A LOWLY GRAVE.

'Tis a lowly grave, but it suits her best,
Since it breathes of fragrance, and speaks of rest;
And meet for her is its calm repose,
Whose life was so stormy and sad to its close.

'Tis a shady dell where they laid her form,
And the hills gather round it to break the storm,
While above her head the bending trees
Arrest the wing of each ruder breeze.

A trickling stream, as it winds below,
Hath a music of peace in its quiet flow;
And the buds that are ever in bloom above,
Tell of some minist'ring spirit's love.

It is sweet to think that, when all is o'er,
And life's fever'd pulses shall fret no more,
There still shall be one, with a fond regret,
Who will not forsake, and who cannot forget:

One kindlier heart, all untainted by earth,
That has kept the fresh bloom from its bud and its birth,
Whose tears for the sorrows of youth shall be shed,
And whose prayer shall still rise for the early dead.

SILENCE.

The desert hath its pyramid; but there
Silence is sovereign. Mighty is his throne,
Towering above the waste, and unassail'd
By clamoring subjects. The invader, there,
Is spell-bound at the threshold, and grows fix'd,
Chain'd by the subtle spirit of the Past;—
The dead of thirty centuries, that stand round,
Each with glazed, staring eye, and gloomy smile,
That mocks the intrusive insolence that dares
Ascend to their dread summits; with fond passion
Dreaming of idle conquest in a realm
To silence consecrate. His sovereign spell,
No less supreme than imperceptible,
Holds Thought bewilder'd,—holds the exploring eye
Baffled in mazes that provoke to search,
While mocking it with phantoms. O'er the plains—
Tracts burning with the brightness of a sun
That rears no idle flowers, and needs no streams
To quench the thirst of nature—still he roves,
Forgetting the fierce passion in his aim;—

Subdued himself; and feeling, at each march,
The hand of Fate upon him, and her sway
Superior to the idle boast of Earth.
With speaking finger press'd upon his lips,
He makes sad progress, and at length lies down;—
Sleeps in the shadow of the pyramid,
And dreaming of the sovereign of the place,
Yields up the sway to Silence,—that dread power
That holds the treasures of the sun in fee,
Dumb ever, speaking nothing of his wealth!

He is the saddest despot, with a realm
Older than that of Time; for he was strong,
And had full sway, and all the attributes
Of most unlimited rule, ere Time was born;
And still shall sway, when, from the womb of years,
The universal consciousness shall spring,
Which shall unseal all barriers of the Past,
Making it Present; of the Future, show
The full development; while the periods link'd
Declare the death of Time. Until that hour,
How vainly would we read the histories
Of empire seal'd by Silence! Find the speech
For that great stony Archimage, that sits
Vacant amid the desert; with no voice
To answer for that dread abundant life
That's now lock'd up in shadow,—deep in vaults,
Whose treasured mysteries there, securely kept,
Lie guarded by our fears. We may pursue
The stony labyrinths, and unwind the clues
To vaults of vacancy; we may unfold
The mummied sleeper from his unguent sheets;
Unwind the mystic scroll, and trace, with toil,
The written characters that seem to speak

From ancient fingers. What the Magian wrote,
May rest beneath our eyes; but will they read?
Or what proportion of the needful speech,
To answer for so dread an empire,
Shall we extort from meagre chronicles
And empty tongues like these? The Past is past,—
Not needful to our present, and denied,
Perchance, with proper eye to our best knowledge,
To our too curious search. 'Tis through our past
Alone that we shall penetrate the maze;
Leaving our mysteries in turn for those
Who, with irreverent homage, most like ours,
Shall vex the silence of our vaults in death.
The sovereign who presides above the waste,
Stands the sure guardian of its mysteries;
Not to be won; persuaded by no arts;
Awed by no power; defrauded by no skill,
That boldly tries the entrance to his cell
With cunning office; and, with confident tongue
Cries out "Eureka," at each passage won,
To find himself in a new labyrinth,
Which offers no way out. We must become
True subjects of the Silence sovereign here,—
Ourselves subdued to silence—ere we read
The secrets in his keeping. 'Till that hour
That links the great three periods all in one,
We shall but mock ourselves with wisdom's seeming;
And, with the appetite to sway all kingdoms,
Starve Thought above her scrolls.

But, rising then,
A moving thing of wonder and of life,
Bright in the place of the decaying sun,
This sovereign, speechless now and stony-eyed,

Shall find fit language. From his lips shall fall
The spell that seals them now. With finger lift,
He shall point out the avenues,—unfold
The clues that wind throughout the labyrinth;
Give up the key that locks the mystic scroll,
And solve the enigma. His new song shall wake
Ten thousand other voices, from whose strains
Concurrent, with meet harmonies, shall flow
A second birth of light. The truths, thus won,
Shall speak through myriad voices, but no tongues;
The soul shall drink in consciousness, yet ask
No ears for hearing,—need no breathing words,
Such as are utter'd from elaborate lips,
And by the violent spirit. In his sway
The sense shall gather happiest harmonies;
And, such the symmetry of his perfect tones,
Our dreams shall each have life; each look be speech;
Each flight a revelation; not a wing
Shall speed on mission, but beneath a flood
Of certain light as beauty; eyes shall drink
With joy and gratitude, effortless and fond,
Best knowledge from the gleams in other eyes,
Whose language shall be love! . . . .
. . . . A worship, now,
In this secluded forest of the west,—
(In the cold shadows of the pyramid
No longer,—yet in silence full as deep,—
The silence of a new approaching birth,
Not of a long, and long-forgotten death),—
Shall yet betray to me dim shadowings of
His empire, and the mystic spells that make
His kingdom's secret. Hither, when I rove
At twilight, do the glimmerings lead me on;
And, in a wondrous consciousness, most like

The whisper of a spirit to my soul,
I feel the embodied silence as it grows
To form and feature : a great shadowy form,
That beckons me to follow, till I go
Where the thick woods grow round me to a wall,
And the o'erclosing trees become a roof,
And so, my temple ! With bow'd head and heart
I worship ! I hear voices, and see forms
That bend above me—echo to my vows—
Receive them ; hallow ; and, though solemnly,
Smile on me, and unfold their cavernous eyes ;
So that I read the mystic in their scrolls,
By supernatural light. There, will they show
Their mysteries ; for that there the selfish heart
Comes never ; and 'tis only faith that wins
The truth from revelation. Silence there
Possess'd and spell'd me ;—sole, in sacred groves
Which held his dim traditions, stood to meet,
And welcomed me to walks of death and ages ;
Guiding me as a master, glad to teach,
Yet awing like a god. Solemnly, then,
I bow'd my soul within me, and gave up
The lowlier impulse, and received straightway
The holier spirit. Never yet before
Stood I in such a presence ! Thought was nigh,
Brooding, unwhispering ; Faith, with orbs uplift,
Drank in great raptures ; Hope, beside her, spread
Bright pinions, folding and unfolding vans,
Eager for flight ; and Love, with hooded eyes,
Look'd downward, trembling with the quick, sweet beat
Of the awaken'd pulses in her heart.
Oh ! the dear fulness of that solitude,
And the rich voices of that sacred speech,
That never broke the silence ! Oh ! the spells !—

The eternal calm of nature; peace of earth;
Sweet whisperings of the void; the spirit-gleams,
That made the twilight harmony, and crept,
Like wings, all listening, through the tufted tops
Of the great trees, and hung in brooding there,
Filling the vacant world with holy things,
To the fond worshipper; with each a sign,
Making the silence fruitful and divine! . . . .
The glorious fulness of the place o'ercame
My humbled nature; and I bow'd me down,
Even on the little hillock where I stood,
And, as the light winds rose, and, here and there,
Shook down the dead leaf from the bending trees,
I could but deem that Silence—that sad god—
Detach'd, with gentle hand, these faded gifts,
In token of his melancholy sway!

VIA SACRA.

Hither, with reverent spirit, bend thy steps,
Scarce breathing. We are on the *Sacred Way*
Of Athens, leading out to Eleusis.
A nation's heart is in this dust! Its faith
Lies in these altars! See you not, we move
'Mongst monuments of might, which thus are made
Sacred themselves; deriving honor due
From honors they record? A calm delight
Subdues our awe. We pass through aged groves,
And sense-beguiling gardens, which lead on
By Cephissus' sweet streams, even to the heights

Of Œgaleus, and the sacred plain,
Where all is soul once more!
Oh! we shall dream
Of these hereafter, when, in western lands,
We trace the unnoted forests. Shall *they* have
Such altars? They have names of might like these;
Marble like this of pure Pentelicus;—
Yes, but the Phidias,—the Praxiteles;—
Where is the genius sworn to Fame,—the art
That hallows as it touches, and bids speak
The stubborn marble? We had better ask
For the religion which demands the shrine!
It is the Faith that makes the Priest—he comes
To serve the recognized master, not to make!
The popular heart must *feel* the god—must glow
With his divinity, ere it builds the shrine,
Or summons Priests to service! Patience! patience!
For us, there must be one great labor first,—
First make our sacred way!

THE BARD.

I.

Where dwells the spirit of the Bard—what sky
Persuades his daring wing,—
Folded in soft carnation, or in snow
Still sleeping, far o'er summits of the cloud,
And, with a seeming, sweet unconsciousness,
Wooing his plume, through baffling storms to fly,
Assured of all that ever yet might bless
The spirit, by love and loftiest hope made proud,
Would he but struggle for the dear caress!—

Or would his giant spring,
Impell'd by holiest ire,
Assail the sullen summits of the storm,
Bent with broad breast and still impatient form,
Where clouds unfold themselves in leaping fire!
What vision wins his soul,—
What passion wings his flight,—
What dream of conquest woos his eager eye!—
How glows he with the strife,—
How spurns he at control,—
With what unmeasured rage would he defy
The foes that rise around and threaten life!—
His upward flight is fair,
He goes through parting air,
He breaks the barrier cloud, he sees the eye that's there,
The centre of the realm of storm that mock'd him but to dare!
And now he grasps the prize,
That on the summit lies,
And binds the burning jewel to his brow;
Transfigured by its bright,
He wears a mightier face,
Nor grovels more in likeness of the earth;—
His wing a bolder flight,
His step a wilder grace,
He glows, the creature of a holier birth;—
Suns sing, and stars glow glad around his light;
And thus he speeds afar,
'Mid gathering sun and star,
The sov'ran, he, of worlds, where these but subjects are;
And men that mark'd his wing with mocking sight,
Do watch and wonder now;—
Will watch and worship with delight, anon,
When far from hiss and hate, his upward form hath gone!

II.

Oh! ere that van was won,
Whose flight hath braved the sun—
Whose daring strength and aim
Have scaled the heights of cloud and bared their breasts of flame;
What lowly toil was done,—
How slow the moments sped,—
How bitter were the pangs that vex'd the heart and head!
The burden which he bore,
The thorns his feet that tore,
The cruel wounds he suffer'd with no moan,—
Alone,—and still alone!—
Denial, which could smile,
Beholding, all the while,
How salter than the sea were the salt tears he shed;
And over all, the curse,
Than all of these more worse,
Prostrate, before the common way, to bear
The feet of hissing things,
Whose toil it is to tear,
And tramp the glorious creature born to wings!
Ah! should he once despair!—

III.

But, strength from lowliness,—
From patience, power, and pride,—
And freedom ever from the deep duresse!
These, to the one denied,
Still soothe the drear distress,
Brought by the very grief when well defied!
First, grovelling where he lay,
To want and woe the prey,
Unconscious that the darkness led to day;

With eyes from birth still seal'd,
As are the eaglet's ere they dream to fly,
The realm of open empire unreveal'd;—
First came the boon,—the precious boon—to see
That the broad firmament was spread above
A world that yet was free;
And, in the embracing and delicious air,
There hung great wings, whose plumage, bright with love,
Seem'd ever natural to the aim and eye!—
Were these but won!—with these!—
Oh! thence, with fond devotion, rose the prayer
For the one gift that promised such delight,
The single boon of flight!—
A prayer to make the hopeful heart grow wild!—
And, with the hope, still struggling, like the child,
To whom the eager mind the muscle brings,—
Not yet secure of foothold, but erect,
He grew,—in watches of the night, he grew,
When others slept,—in such secure degrees,
He vex'd no jealous view;
And thus the upward progress went uncheck'd;
And thus he put on wings;—
Until, with strength to soar,
He felt the earth no more,
And shook its dust away, and all its reptile things;
The eye and wing together won the height;
And they who mock'd and smote,
Might vainly hiss and roar,
With nothing left them but to dream and dote:
Unless—and this were something of a bliss,
Compensative, from mercy, for their hiss—
To bow, while yet they gaze, and in their shame, adore!

IV.

What if the toil and struggle were with earth?
The purpose of earth's self is for a sphere
In which she has no share;—
And thus it is that she may loathe the birth,
Wherein a spirit so rare
Makes her the rack on which to stretch his wings.
Vainly he loathes and strives;
The victim feels but thrives;
It is appointed he shall still go forth,
If that he neither yields him to her hate,
Nor subjugates his pinion to her snare;
And, it is written, his first passion flings
Her clay off with her fetters, and her stains
With all his immature pains;—
As, in the expression of a joy elate,
With the exulting sense of a new dawn,
One flings away the dreary doubt that pall'd,
With sense of weariness, at close of day,
And, with the merriest strains,
Bids them bring forth his steed upon the sun-bright lav
He only hath to wait,—
To wait with confident heart; without complaint,
Endure, whate'er his lowliness of state,—
And, with a spirit resolved and never faint,
To struggle with the griefs that still oppress;
And the appointed moment will unscale
His eye, and he will break from all duresse,
To see the glowing vans, all purple-hued,
Stooping, with gradual waver, to his will;—
At dawn, when happiest dreams his pulses thrill,
To find them freshly to his shoulders glued;
Till, with a sense of upward life, he springs,
Scarce conscious of the motion of his wings,

To flight, and in his flight as all unconscious sings ;—
Voice, wing, and eye, being children of a birth ;—
Flight of a threefold power, that still implies,
When fairly parted from the enthralling earth,
The song, and sight, and soul, that shape it for the skies !

v.

If, for a moment, he forbears his flight,
Won by seducing siren of the shore,
Self-chidden, he is soon upon his way,
Still, upward, into light !
For, not in the embrace of mortal clay,
Sleeps long the soul of the imperial lyre !
The eye, that is the shoulder of his wing,
Still, in advance, beholds the approaching day,
Long ere the Night, her head on her own heart,
Hath girt her to depart !
And thus doth he aspire,
And thus doth he explore,
And thus he finds his freedom, spite of art,
That would beguile him from his great desire,
And bind him vassal to most lowly will !
'Tis by necessity that he breaks away,
From earth and bondage still !
The soul, that is his substance, warms with ire,
Impatient of each profitless delay ;
And, though the song of the siren in his ear,
Works subtly in sweet mazes to his brain,
Yet ever a still voice of sadness tells
Of the past struggle, and the bitter care,
That kept him captive ever and in pain.
Thus warn'd, his better nature soon rebels,
And the false siren glozes still in vain.
Taught that a wing so nerved, need never pause

For rest which humble pinion may require,
He looks to far Parnassus, and takes hues,
Golden and azure, from the endowéd shapes
That linger still above its sacred heights;
And, with the glad persuasion of his song,
An emulous passion stimulates his wing,
So that he passes by the guardian capes,
Triumphant, and, with progress of his own,
He challenges each proud and antique Muse,
By her own altars, to the great delights,
She has made holy:—not that he would wring,
With proud compulsion, sad acknowledgment,
As of the presence of some nobler thing;
But that he fortifies the ancient cause,
Which many, by her own persuasions choose,—
With meet example;—and—her crown reset—
Doth, by his might, her primitive sway prolong.—
He sings, as she hath tutor'd him to sing,
A chant of ages that sustains her throne,
By catholic utterance of the great intent
Which makes her mission hallow'd, and for aye,
And, through a chosen race, o'er all asserts its sway!

VI.

'Twere vain to scan his office, and declare
The power he holds upon the earth and air,
And the sleek spirits that move them to their moods;
He is the sov'ran of the spell that sways
The groves in their spring sweetness—he hath power
To bring a sudden freshness to the hour—
Charm the green leaf, endow the purple flower,
And haunt with such a presence the great floods,
That there shall grow a glory on their banks,
And men shall gather from afar in ranks,

And bend before high altars he shall raise,
And speak with voices only won from him!
He shall bring beauty to the waste, and light
With bloom the wilderness, and so subdue
The terrors of the shade, that it shall be
Made sacred, with a halo, when most dim;
So that its dark, made beautiful to view,
Shall move new passion in the multitude,
To love the shadow whose obscurity
Hath lovelier eyes than haunt the night, and brood
Sad-smiling o'er still fountains that awake,
To fill their cisterns only for her sake!
For it hath been decreed his office still
To summon natural destinies, and invoke,
As with the simple utterance of his will,
The nimble servitors that love his yoke.
So, the devoted Passions hail his sway,
And Joy and Grief, with their link'd torches, glide,
Mute ever, but not heedless, night and day,
Serving his purpose, one on either side.
And hope, which is a feather from his plumes,
Now sinks, now falls, like shooting star through night,
And, even in falling, the abyss illumes,—
As memory of the first joy brings a light
To the sad eyes inhabited by woe—
The waving of a torch o'er mountain lake,
At midnight, while the storm-cloud, stooping low,
Hath iced it with a blackness naught may break.
Nor is he wanting in celestial aid;—
Love being his meekest servitor, with brow
Twined with the myrtle, ever speaking truth,
That never fears the forfeit of his vow,
And, bashful in her bright, but unafraid,
Bearing the rose that symbols innocent youth.

VII.

Not lonely, with the sad nymph Solitude,
Deep in the cover of the ancient wood,
Where the sun leaves him, and the happy dawn,
Stealing with blushes over the gray lawn,
Still finds him, all forgetful of the flight
Of hours, that passing still from dark to bright,
Know not to loiter,—all their progress naught:—
His eye, unconscious of the day, is bright
With inward vision; till, as sudden freed,
By the superior quest of a proud thought,
He darts away with an unmeasured speed;
His pinion purpling as he gains the height,
Where still, though all obscured from mortal sight,
He bathes him in the late smiles of the sun;—
And oh! the glory, as he guides his steed,
Flakes from his pinions falling, as they soar
To mounts where Eos binds her buskins on,
And proud Artemis, watching by her well,
For one,—sole-fortunate of all his race,—
With hand upon his mouth her beagle stays,
Lest he should baffle sounds too sweet to lose,
That even now are gliding with the dews.
How nobly he arrays
His robes for flight—his robes, the woven of songs,
Borrow'd from starry spheres,—with each a muse
That, with her harmonies, maintains its dance
Celestial, and its circles bright prolongs.
Fair ever, but with warrior form and face,
He stands before the eye of each young grace,
Beguiling the sweet passion from her cell,
And still subjecting beauty by the glance,
Which speaks his own subjection to a spell,
The eldest born of rapture, that makes Love,

At once submissive and the Conqueror,
He conquers but to bring deliverance,
And with deliverance light;—
To conquer, he has only to explore,—
And makes a permanent empire, but to spread,—
Though speeding on with unobserving haste,—
A wing above the waste.
A single feather from his pinion shed,
A single beam of beauty from his eye,
Takes captive the dim sleeping realm below,
Through eyes of truest worshippers, that straight
Bring shouts to welcome and bright flowers to wreathe
His altars; and, as those, to life from death,
Pluck'd sudden, in their gratitude and faith
Deem him a god who wrought the miracle,—
So do they take him to their shrines, and vow
Their annual incense of sweet song and smell,
For him to whom their happiness they owe.
Thus goes he still from desert shore to shore,
Where life in darkness droops, where beauty errs,
Having no worshippers,
And lacking sympathy for the light!—The eye,
That is the spirit of his wing, no more,
This progress once begun, can cease to soar,
Suffers eclipse, or sleeps!—
No more be furl'd
The wing,—that, from the first decreed to fly,
Must speed to daily conquests, deep and high,
Till no domain of dark unlighted keeps,
And all the realm of strife beneath the sky
Grows one, in beauty and peace for evermore,—
Soothed to eternal office of delight,
By these that wing the soul on its first flight,
For these are the great spirits that shape the world!

BLESSINGS ON CHILDREN.

Blessings on the blessing children, sweetest gifts of Heaven to earth,
Filling all the heart with gladness, filling all the house with mirth;
Bringing with them native sweetness, pictures of the primal bloom
Which the bliss forever gladdens, of the region whence they come;
Bringing with them joyous impulse of a state withouten care,
And a buoyant faith in being, which makes all in nature fair;
Not a doubt to dim the distance, not a grief to vex the nigh,
And a hope that in existence, finds each hour a luxury;
Going singing, bounding, brightening—never fearing as they go,
That the innocent shall tremble, and the loving find a foe;
In the daylight, in the starlight, still with thought that freely flies,
Prompt and joyous, with no question of the beauty in the skies;
Genial fancies winning raptures, as the bee still sucks her store,
All the present still a garden glean'd a thousand times before;
All the future, but a region, where the happy serving thought,
Still depicts a thousand blessings, by the wingéd hunter caught;
Life a chase where blushing pleasures only seem to strive in flight,
Lingering to be caught, and yielding gladly to the proud delight;
As the maiden, through the alleys, looking backward as she flies,
Woos the fond pursuer onward, with the love-light in her eyes.

Oh! the happy life in children, still restoring joy to ours,
Making for the forest music, planting for the wayside flowers;
Back recalling all the sweetness, in a pleasure pure as rare,
Back the past of hope and rapture bringing to the heart of care.
How, as swell the happy voices, bursting through the shady grove,
Memories take the place of sorrows, time restores the sway to love!
We are in the shouting comrades, shaking off the load of years,
Thought forgetting, strifes and trials, doubts and agonies and tears;
We are in the bounding urchin, as o'er hill and plain he darts,
Share the struggle and the triumph, gladdening in his heart of hearts;

What an image of the vigor and the glorious grace we knew,
When to eager youth from boyhood, at a single bound we grew!
Even such our slender beauty, such upon our cheek the glow,
In our eyes the life and gladness—of our blood the overflow.
Bless the mother of the urchin! in his form we see her truth:
He is now the very picture of the memories in our youth;
Never can we doubt the forehead, nor the sunny flowing hair,
Nor the smiling in the dimple speaking chin and cheek so fair:
Bless the mother of the young one, he hath blended in his grace,
All the hope and joy and beauty, kindling once in either face!

Oh! the happy faith of children! that is glad in all it sees,
And with never need of thinking, pierces still its mysteries;
In simplicity profoundest, in their soul abundance blest,
Wise in value of the sportive, and in restlessness at rest;
Lacking every creed yet having faith so large in all they see,
That to know is still to gladden, and 'tis rapture but to be.
What trim fancies bring them flowers; what rare spirits walk their wood,
What a wondrous world the moonlight harbors of the gay and good!
Unto them the very tempest walks in glories grateful still,
And the lightning gleams, a seraph, to persuade them to the hill:
'Tis a sweet and loving spirit, that throughout the midnight rains,
Broods beside the shutter'd windows, and with gentle love complains;
And how wooing, how exalting, with the richness of her dyes,
Spans the painter of the rainbow, her bright arch along the skies,
With a dream like Jacob's ladder, showing to the fancy's sight,
How 'twere easy for the sad one to escape to worlds of light!
Ah! the wisdom of such fancies, and the truth in every dream,
That to faith confiding offers, cheering every gloom, a gleam!
Happy hearts, still cherish fondly each delusion of your youth,
Joy is born of well believing, and the fiction wraps the truth.

THE HURRICANE.

With dawn we started on our pilgrimage;
The day was fair at first, with rosy streaks
Suffusing all the east, that, as the sun
Rose radiant o'er the tree tops, grew to gold,
And, softening palely as he soar'd aloft,
Yielded, at length, to the intenser fires
He kindled as he sped. But, ere an hour,
And while the flaming standard he advanced
Flaunted most proudly o'er his eastern towers,
We mark'd a dissonant aspect in the west,
That glow'd adverse—a cloud with sulphurous edge,
Rising with gradual vans that soon diffused
Its murky tints o'er half the western heavens,
Thence stretching to the north. Suddenly fell
A weight upon the atmosphere, that breathed
Wearily, and with moaning, as at night
The giant struggles with the incubus,—
Struggles and sighs but with no power to stir.
Hotly, as from a furnace, came the breath,
That was nor breeze nor zephyr, from the south,
Where denser grew the shape. Shorn of his beams,
Yet burning redly in a vaporous void,
The sun toil'd on in heaven, as dreading still
The encounter that now threaten'd in his path.
Momently grew he paler as he sped,
Then sudden sank from sight,—swallow'd in a sea,
That all his beams extinguish'd. Over all
Hung the gigantic shape that soon became
The pall of the universe; and, settling down,
Shrouded the sky and forest. Thus the mass

Hung brooding, while accumulating clouds
Merged momently within its large embrace,
That still expanded wide. The great pines groan'd
As straining 'neath the burden that they bore,
And shuddering with a something yet to bear
From the great vans incumbent. Slow the day
Creeps on; a deathly silence wraps the scene
As of a terror threatening.

Wer't cloud, or wind,
Or storm of rain and thunder, that impends,
It might be well to hurry on our way
With traveller hardihood, that rates the hours
By miles, and at the measured hostel baits.
But he who dwells beneath a tropic sky,
Knows better in these aspects what to fear.
The lowly cabin of the Borderer,
Close crouching in the shade of yonder hill,
Offers best shelter. Thither, for a while,
Till these great wings, expanding with their blasts,
Collapse in arrowy tempests, that shoot swift
While forests groan, and sink beneath their sweep,
And placid waters, from their valleys roused,
Roll, raging in their terror—roll apart,
To meet again in strife, with angry crests,
That thunder as they meet. The awful hush,—
The sultry atmosphere—the stifling breath
That makes the laboring bosom heave with toil,—
Betoken wrath. This is the Hurricane!
The Vampire of the storm, whose raven wings
Spread, pall-like, o'er the Earth it lulls to sleep,
Till, in the deepest lull of its sad dream
It rouses; and, with ruthless and wild shriek,
Goes raging, rending,—with a power that sweeps

The forest, and upon the eternal rocks
Scores terribly the record of its wrath!

We soon found refuge in the lowly cot,—
A most rude cottage of trimm'd pines, that crouch'd
In safety 'mongst the shadow-keeping hills.
From the piazza—with an anxious gaze,
We watched the approaching terror! Group'd around
Gather'd the simple household,—sire and dame,
And scores of little ones. Too well they knew,
By frequent witness, of that fearful shape,
With its black, brooding aspect. Year by year,
Had they beheld its progress—felt its breath
Of fire,—precursor of its arrowy flight,
And seen the terrible ruin which it wrought
In glorious realms of forest, as it rush'd,
With flight of thousand thunderbolts,—and share,
Ploughing through woods and fields, smiting great heads,
And leaving bald the places which had been
Bless'd with the undulating green of trees
And waving shrubs and blossoms; in their stead—
Those fearful wings gone over it—prostrate forms
Torn, rent and shattered,—indiscriminate piles,
Lying as writhing in their agonies:
A battle-field where none survives—where fate
Sweeps victor and vanquish'd equally; the plain
Sharing the deadly blight of those it bore,
Its green shrubs wither'd, and the desolate earth
Made sterile, with a charm no more in flowers.

"See," said my old companion of the route—
"See where its black brows tower above yon steep,
The shape contracting 'neath it, crouching close,
Keen watching, as it were, with appetite

Raging for blood, like tiger that in-tree,
Waits the approaching victim.
We might deem,—
Taught by superior instinct,—that these folds
Lurid and black, like robes that shroud the Fates,
Conceal'd some terrible Demon—some dread power
Commission'd to destroy; even as the Fate
That hung o'er Nineveh in storm and fire,
Nor fled, till o'er its temples went the sea
Of bitumen, and from its thousand homes,
Ceased sudden the long cry of agony,
The work being done forever.
That dread shape
So silent, brooding with the doom it brings,
Hath its own life and mission. It obeys,
With human consciousness the will that bids—
"Go!"—and it goeth. It will plunge anon
A mountain in its might, yet, in its sweep,
Mocking the free wing'd eagle. What a power
To work in such a guise: so ill defined,
So vast and so unseemly to the eye;
So incompact and vague. See, in the south
For many a league outstretch'd, the sluggish form
Lies shapeless—volume upon volume piled,—
Thin robes of gray between,—a melting mist,
That wraps its dusky limbs as in a sea,
Whose farthest waters lose themselves from sight
In deepening folds of cloud. And now the shape
Takes motion: soon that motion will be life!
How terrible the pause that grows between!
Thick vapors close around us, stifling and hot,
Till, with a difficult breath, we pray for storm,—
For the wild tempest in its angriest mood,
That threatens,—rather than the breath of fire

It sends in foretaste of the wrath to come!
Nor pray we long in vain! A wing is felt,
That stirs the masses with a sulphurous gale,
Evolving all their lightnings. Murmurs swell,
Mysterious, low, as rising from the seas;
A hollow voice, that, kindred with their depths,
Takes on the sullen chiding of their caves,
And threatens with their billows. Now, a shaft
Speeds sudden from the bosom of the cloud,
Opening the sable jaws that close as soon,
Just showing the dread gulfs that lie below,
Steaming with thunders. Deeper murmurs flow
From the faint edges of the o'erwhelming mass,
Whose vans are now in motion, wide unroll'd;
But, ever and anon, up-curling still
Their lengthen'd volumes as for newer strength.
Thus the grim serpent, eager for his prey,
Contracts his spiry form in knotted folds,
That he may better fling him forth in ire,
With muscle proper to his venomous will!
Look, where the lighter volumes upward float,
To fill the valleys which the terrible shape
Hath yielded. See them, as they mix, and make
A whirlpool in the sky. The birds fly low,
Screaming for shelter to the stunted copse:—
The vulture hath no longer eye for prey;
A single owl cries hooting from the wood,
As grateful for the darkening sky he loves;—
And the imperial savage who presides
O'er the thin realms of air, with wing less swift
In flight than conflict, bends his eastward way
To some abandon'd summit of the storm!
The horrid pause is o'er! It comes at last,
The shrieking terror, with convulsive bounds,

Solèmn but swift, that still before its path,
Sends fearful intimations of approach ;—
Even as some mighty host of Attila
Goes singing into battle,—singing of blood,
And striking horrid shields with spears of rage.
How sullenly bend the great boughs of the wood !
The oak scarce breasts the strife, and groans to meet
Its legions. To the roaring in the skies
Ascends the voice of waters. Deep to deep
Is calling—and their mighty concerts make
An awful choir of storm. Behold, where still
The black battalions gather for the charge ;—
The wings contract—the rearward masses crowd,
As struggling for the van. A deadlier shape
Shoots outward from the midst ; and, breathing now
With pestilent heat along its destined path,
It gives the terrible signal, which begins
The warring of three worlds. With lightnings arm'd,
The fearful spectre hurries on his course,
And the great forests crouch. The mountains heave,
As with the earthquake's labors ; and the plain
Is shrouded with his legions. For the sea
They take their arrowy progress. The strong pine
They wring while passing, and with scornful might
Tear from the earth the great well-rooted oak,
And fling it on their path. Sweet fields that lay—
The virgin gifts of summer, by the sun
Bestow'd, when first he look'd on her with love,—
Are plough'd with furrows, such as leave broad scars
For ages on their beauty, and deform !
But reckless, the invader with his scourge
Their lawnéd realms still ravages. An hour
Hath left the blight of centuries. Too late,
Though with such terrible haste, he darts away

For other victories. For the seas he speeds,
With power that grows from progress. Ocean roars
With mortal agonies, as his giant form
Down plunges in its billows. The green waves
Divide in horror! With triumphant shriek
He ploughs the abyss, lays its deep hollows bare,
And shows their ghastly secrets. Then away
He hurries, as if satisfied in rage :—
His lengthening lines still following, howling hoarse,
In train of battle, and his terrible form
Still rending, till the gray void swallows all!

SONG.—THE BREEZE THAT SIGHS.

The breeze that sighs through lemon groves,
The odor in their gift may bring,
As song from heart that truly loves,
May soothe the heart that cannot sing.

But what if winds, in progress vain
Should waste their sweets in empty air,
And hearts should idly breathe the strain,
For other hearts that will not hear?

Better the breeze had never swept,
Its sweets to waste, the generous grove;
And still the foolish heart had kept
The secret close that told its love.

True, they had lost, the grove of sweets,
The sweetest kiss it ever knew;
And the poor heart, with love that beats,
Had stored in vain its treasures too.

ON THE DEATH OF AN OBSCURE CITIZEN.

Men wonder when the planets do go out,
When stars desert their places—when the might
Of the great oak is shatter'd, and the storm
Sweeps the imperial trophy from the brow
Of him who look'd the god in mortal eyes,
And grew so to his own. But ah! for thee,
So lowly in life's places—with no power
To lift thee into majesty—no grace,
To woo glad eyes in homage to thy walks,
And consecrate thy doings with applause
That cheers to new achievements—with no aim
Of greatness, and but little thirst for life—
Death hath no dignity, and thou hast sunk,
Silent, from out the crowded ways of man,
Into the quiet grave, and art not miss'd!
But nature hath her obsequies for all,
And virtue is remember'd with a tear,
When fame itself grows voiceless o'er the great,
And leaves their shrines to ruin. Thou hast made
Some sweet affections blossom at thy grave,
Which hath befitting flowers, that take on bloom
Ere spring hath made escape from winter cells,
Still pale with cold and terror of pursuit.
Love did not shrink to shelter in thy cot,
Though at the door stood poverty; and toil,
For evermore within, from dawn to dark,
Had little respite to enjoy the smiles
That warm'd his courage to resolve, and made
The burden easy of the daily care!
But in the very rareness of the joy,
Grows its delicious value; and thy bliss,

If lowly in condition,—wanting state
In utterance, and significant to thee,
Alone, of all around thee, was not less
The wholesome solace of a life that knew
A cottage empire only. In thy home,
Sate peace, content with lowliness, that gave
New fireside warmth and gladness to thy hearth,
That wore no gauds of grandeur. Love could share
Thy labors, and could lighten them; and truth
Found thee a treasure, that, within thy heart,
Assured of trust, made all a calm delight
That never wept for fortune. Thou wast blest,
To the necessity reconciled, that made
Thy home secure from envy, yet which brought
An adequate beauty to thy homely weeds,
And sweetness to thy threshold; and thy life
Pass'd on as passes the long summer day,
O'er silent forests, making shade and sun,
Equally fruitful of repose and love,
Commercing in rare union with a joy
That if it knows no gushings passionate,
Knows not the storms of passion which but take
The heat of pleasure, all the calm denied,
That makes the pleasure holy and secure.
Thy living and thy dying, both the same,
Safe from the tempest; in the world without
Making no stir. Few were they who knew
Thy virtues; few at thy departure felt
That something which was precious to the day,
Had been despoil'd by night. Yet in thy home,
There hangs a blind sad vacancy, that looks
Through eyes of terror to the lonely seat
Of thy sad widow. If she weeps, her tears
Lack voice, unless to those, her orphan brood,

That hear, through a like consciousness of loss,
And echo with a silence like her own.
Ah! nature hath not one unnoted child:
Some soul still sorrows when the light goes out,
Though feeble, which in poverty's lone cell,
Shone for the humblest; desolate hearts still shrine
The lineaments of care, when thus allied
To love; and precious instincts still discern
The little lowly hiding-place in earth,
Unmark'd by any monument, where sleeps
The form of him whose gifts in poverty
Made poverty's self a treasure, best of all!

ABANDONMENT.

Well, they have all departed,—the false friends,
With all the illusive hopes that led astray,
To dream and madness!—and the struggle ends!
I shall be free, at least the rest o' the day:—
Unloved shall be unflatter'd; and, alone,
Be safe from the poisoner, who feeds the ear
That he may drug the senses with a lie,
Suck'd from most innocent sources. Now they're gone,
I wonder how I suffer'd them so near;
More wonder why I wept to see them fly!
But credulous hearts sleep ever over-late,
And wake to the loss of half their better hours;
See the sun sink, that should be throned in state,
And rage in impotent fury against Fate,
To whom they charge the robbery of their powers,
That simply had been drugg'd by friendly cares,
Mock'd by conceit and credulous length of ears.

THE IMMORTALITY OF THE BELOVED.

None die but the forgotten !—The twin soul
Makes league with an eternal memory,
Whose voice is sleepless, and forever cries,
Through the still watches of the lonely night,
A word that is a spell !—This, when he hears,
Sends the survivor forth !—One only path
He takes,—and at one only altar bends,—
The grave of the beloved one :—a sad joy
Is in his desolate heart ; and, stooping down,
With eyes, that, ever-dropping with their tears,
Still blind him to the solemn toil he takes,—
He writes upon the grave—he writes in flowers,
The well-known name ; and thus, in death's despite,
Hallows the loved one into life !—What death
So powerful, as can trench upon the fame,
Which grows in true affections ?—which springs up,
In greenest gardens of the memory,
Love planting ever his consoling flowers,
And bending gratitude, and weeping faith,
Nursing and tending with devoted watch,—
So that no noxious breath, nor wind, nor blight,
Shall over-pass the consecrated place,
Or rend its blooming tokens ;—which, thus kept,
Are trophies,—proudest trophies—that declare
Love's empire over all ;—a green amidst
Most cheerless sands ;—a marble on the waste ;
A bird of light, that, rising from the tomb,
Still leaves it vacant,—yet forever soars
From the same spot ; pure emblem of the truth,
That, born of heaven, and with a wing that still
Seeks evermore its home, as if for food,

In the high place of its pure origin,—
Must still return to earth in sympathy,
And share the suffering, and denied to die,
Save, still undying, the sweet memories
Of him it could not save!—

IN ABSENCE.

Oh, wert thou but beside me now,
Yon cold and cheerless moon would be
A high and purely passing brow,
That I should joy to watch with thee.

With thee to smile, with thee to cheer,
To soothe and bless my struggling heart,
This weary night would disappear,
For all is happy where thou art.

A thousand promised joys should rise,
In thought and memory, blessing still;
And from thy bright, yet dewy eyes,
The fountains of mine own should fill.

And that dear pledge!—to me how dear,
Since first its budding lips became
A smile to charm, a tone to cheer
Each trembling feeling of my frame:—

Around my neck her clasping hands
Like blooming tendrils round the tree,
A festive wreath of freshest bands
That hide the roughness none should see.

To mark her growth, and, day by day,
Behold her infant mind unclose,
To trim the light, protect the ray,
Defend the bud and love the rose.

Month after month and year by year,
To trace her being's rapid growth,
A father's joy, a mother's care,
The blessing and the pride of both.

Ah! more than sweet is every dream
My fond and fervent fancy brings—
A wooing breath, a winning gleam
Of pure and most delightful things.

Fair images that seen before,
Like angel memories will not part,
And hold their kind dominion o'er
My weary and o'erburden'd heart.

Oh, come to me, for when thou'rt gone,
My spirit sad, nor longer free,
Finds nature dull, and cities lone,
And looks in vain, and weeps for thee.

AT PARTING.

Pray for me at the morning and at eve,
When downward, lingering, goes the mellowéd sun,
Utter thy prayer that he may always leave
A smile, a promise, for the wandering one.

Pray for me, though perchance, with mood like mine,
Forever wayward, wild and obstinate,

All prayer be unavailing—ay, even thine—
Pray still, and I shall not be desolate.

My heart shall fancy in the pleasant breeze,
That gathers in the tree-tops, there's a tone
Sweet, sad, like that which comes o'er moaning seas,
Which thou dost send to cheer the wandering one.

And when I lay me on my noonday bed,
'Neath the broad foliage of the summer vine,
I'll deem the spirit watching at my head,
The spirit that has waited long on thine.

Sweet heart! oh, never yet bloom'd sweeter heart—
Pray for me, and the desert world and wild,
Shall offer tendance, and with gentlest art,
Hallowing thy prayer, shall bless their erring child.

Sweet airs shall be around me, and though men,
Not knowing well have wrong'd me—blest by thee,
The elements shall all look kindlier then,
And doubly grant the boon thou begg'st for me.

MORAL EXILE.

She does not drive me forth with iron hand,
Bared steel, or cruelty yet more acute,
In the stern doom of exile. On her brow
Sits no imperial malice. From her lips
Falls no malignant accent;—but, instead,
Her voice is all melodious, and her smile—
Ah! most deceptive smile that ever mocks
The suffering which it soothes not—shining still,

Would seem to favor the neglected child
She makes her step-son!—
Ah! love not seeks
Smooth smile, soft accent!—love seeks only love;—
Naught less will satisfy its laboring hope,
Appease its hungering longing, or suffice
Its ocean-deep affections! If I sing,
Let the sweet deity that hears my song,
Esteem it sweet; and not, in the dull ear,
Give it cold entrance. If, upon her shrine,
I heap my votive offerings, with a heart
That joins in the hand-service,—let me know
The goddess feels their incense, that my love
Shall relish of her gracious, dear delight.—
But she,—my mother! What seems it to her
That I have sung her beauties? Far aloof
She sits and hears my praises, as some dame,
Proud of position in a royal court,
Sitting as Queen at some high tournament,
That gives indifferent heed to the brave knight
Who battles for her smile. High-prizéd dame,
That makes no count of him whose duteous heart
Beholds no dearer prize;—and coldly takes
His gallant homage as some natural right,
Which is no other than the gift of love—
Love's generous gift, demanding like for like,
Or nothing! 'Tis the bitterest fate of all,
More bitter than the sudden sting of death,
And colder than the black jaws of the grave,
Thus profitless to sue;—thus, hopelessly,
To bend in fruitless labor, still unmark'd
Without reward,—sweet smile of recompense—
Word of encouragement from gracious lips,
Which promise fond remembrance when the toil

Shall be all ended. Let them speak of it,
Whose lot hath thus been cast, and they shall tell
How easier of endurance were the toils
Of poverty in exile;—sweeter far
Its bitter crust and salt draught,—salter yet
By tears that hallow it to hopelessness,
Quenching no mortal thirst!

THE STREAMLET.

I.

Once more in the old places!—and I glow
Again with boyhood. Once again renew'd,
My wandering feet have found the rivulet's flow,
My eyes pursue old vistas in the wood;
My heart partakes their consciousness,—I hear
Long lost, but well known sounds, salute mine ear.

II.

The voices of the forest and the stream,
And murmuring flights of wind, that through the grove
Come fitfully, like fancies in a dream,
And speak of wild and most unearthly love—
Such love as hope prefigures to the boy,
Crowning each hillock with a sunbright joy.

III.

There gleams the opening path, and there, below,
Glimmers the streamlet sparkling through green leaves;
I catch the distant pattering of its flow,
In sudden murmurs, ere mine eye perceives,

Complaining, as it takes its tiny leaps,
To the scoop'd basin where it sings and sleeps.

IV.

It was my father taught me, when a boy,
The winding way that wins it; and I grew
To love the path with an exceeding joy,
That heeded not the moments as they flew,
So sweetly were they then beguiled—gay gleams
All green and gold, the garments of youth's dreams.

V.

And, sitting by its marge, my father said,
That streamlet had a language for his ear,
Though vainly did I bend my boyish head,
With him, but nothing could I ever hear;
Yet, as we did return, he still would say,
He was a better man, so taught that day.

VI.

Yet, surely was there nothing but the flow
Of idle waters, evermore the same—
A sweet, sad pattering, as they went below—
I never heard them syllable a name,
Though much I strove, for in my father's look
I read the serious truth of all he spoke.

VII.

An hundred streams like this the country knows,
From Santee to Savannah—brooks that glide
Through willow tassels—where the laurel blows
In triumph, and the poplar springs in pride;
A slender thread of silvery white it went,
Winding and prattling in its slow descent.

VIII.

Where, then, the mystery of its voice and whence?
Like other forests those which round it grew;
In what the source of that intelligence,
Denied to me, which yet my father knew?
Change had not touch'd its waters,—'twas that morn
As small as in the hour when he was born.

IX.

He too, like me, had from its yellow bed
Pluck'd the gray pebble, and beneath its wave
Had plunged, in summer noon, his aching head,
Glad of the cool delight that still it gave;—
Then he grew up to manhood,—then became
Agéd,—yet was this little stream the same.

X.

His grave is in the forest, and he sleeps
Far from the groves he loved—his voice no more
Is in mine ear; yet through my memory creeps
Its echo, and the wild and solemn lore
He taught me, when we walk'd beside that brook,
Comes back as now within its waves I look.

XI.

The spells of memory to my side command
The shadowy thought, nor desolate nor lone;—
Faint are the images that near me stand,
Yet are they images of things well known;
Years gather to a moment and inform
The trembling bosom which they fail to warm.

XII.

No longer am I desolate, beside
These green and sacred borders: in my ear,
As down I bend, where the fast waters glide,
Murmurs from sweetest fancies do I hear;
Hope takes the swallow's accents, and they bring
To glad the gathering years, a rich and green-eyed spring.

XIII.

And my old sire, he err'd not sure! I feel
As if I were a listener to the spell
Of one whose voice is power! My senses reel!
It is his language,—I should know it well,—
He speaks through these sweet waters which he loved
In boyhood, and where still our footsteps roved.

XIV.

I tremble with a joy—my heart is still,
As, swelling up, the accents break the air;
My spirit, troubled, shrinks, even as the rill
When leaves disturb the sleeping waters there;—
My feet are fasten'd with a subtle charm,
Soothing but startling—full of sweet alarm.

XV.

The accents gather to familiar sounds,
And wake anew a lost and well-loved tone,
I hear the sacred words, while silence rounds
The enchanted circle, and my breath is gone:
They rise melodious, sad, but softly clear,—
My heart receives the music, not mine ear.

XVI.

"I have been when thy father dream'd of thee,
I shall be, when thou dreamest of thy child;
Thy children shall be listeners to me,
Whose tones so oft thy father's feet beguiled;
I am thy guardian genius,—from the first
My waters still have slaked thy spirit's thirst.

XVII.

"When thou shall be forgotten I shall be,
And to the race that shall succeed thee on,
I will repeat my counsel, as to thee,
And like thy footsteps now, shall theirs be won,
From the thick gathering—from the crowded street
With me, within the solitude, to meet.

XVIII.

"And I shall soothe their spirits, as I now
Soothe that of him, their sire; my streams shall be
A gracious freshness for each burning brow,
While my soft voice shall whisper, sweetly free,
Tempering to calm the bosom vex'd and bow'd
By the unfeeling clamors of the crowd.

XIX.

"Go forth, fair boy, and happy be thy years,
Forget not soon the lessons, long our theme,
Nor, when the growing Time shall teach thee tears,
Desert these shady bowers—this sacred stream;
'Twill be my care, when man hath taught thee gloom,
To bring thy worn heart back to all its bloom.

XX.

"Look on these waters when thy mood is sad,
Fly to these groves, when close pursued by power;
These shall restore thee all that made thee glad,
And bring oblivion of the present hour;
Mine is the stream that must forever roll,
A memory not of earth, but of its soul.

XXI.

"I keep affections pure—I save the heart
From Earth's pollutions;—treasured in my wave
Is healing, and the power to make depart
Bad passions, those worst tyrants; and to save
The victim from himself, and still restore
The angel-whiteness of the soul once more.

XXII.

"Oh, when the world hath wrong'd thee, seek me then,
Though, hapless, from thy better self estranged;
Fly to these waters from the strifes of men,
And gazing in them shall thy heart be changed;
Though years have risen between, and strife and scorn,
Yet shall thy face, once more, be that thou wear'st this morn."

SPRING TIME.

Now's the time when Winter's going
From the bowers he blighted long;
Now's the time when Spring is glowing,
Breathing into bloom and song;
When green buds are hourly springing,
In soft bed and sunny vale;

When the merry birds are singing,
Fearless, round the cottage pale;
And, a long-expected comer,
From the gardens of the south,
Swims in sight the blushing Summer,
Sweet in smiles and warm in youth.

Gladsome notes are floating by us,
And from earth a murmur steals,
Softly, which must still ally us
To the clod that breathes and feels.
Life is round us in the breezes,
In the ground a labor grows,
And the humblest motion pleases,
That from living fountain flows.
Stagnant now no more, and frozen,
Lo! the waters flash and run,
And the lake unfetter'd glows in
The new glances of the sun.

Stoop to earth the ear and listen;
Hark! the murmur from below;
Lift the upward eyes—they glisten
With the rich and rosy glow.
Wide and wondrous is the dwelling
Where the lovely builder works,
And the murmur upward swelling,
Tells us where her agent lurks.
Prompt and ready at her summons,
When the signal sounds of spring,
Lo! arise her peers and commons,
Fleet of foot and wild of wing,
In the mansions long forsaken,
Free to spin, to build, and moil;

Now they gather, glad to waken,
Though they waken still to toil.
From their labor grows their treasure,
Silken robes and honeyed spring;
And their very toil is pleasure,
Since they fly, and flying sing.

Yet, throughout her vast dominions,
What unequal forms appear!
Some on gold and purple pinions,
Seem the princes of the air.
Sweets from others' toils assessing,
Stooping only to partake
The rich juice and luscious blessing,
Which they never stoop to make.
Like the lily near the fountain,
Neither do they toil nor spin,
Yet, in joy and splendor mounting,
Life and happiness they win:
Flying ever round the summit,
Heedless of the tribes, that low,
Ply the shovel, dip the plummet,
Grope in earth, and groping, grow.

'Twere meet answer to repining,
Did the lowly grub deplore—
"These were made for soaring, shining,
Shining, singing, as they soar.
When thou wear'st a golden pinion,
Bright like that which soars so free,
Thou shalt have a like dominion,
And the grub shall toil for thee."

HISTORICAL LEGENDS.

CAIUS MARIUS.

I.

The Dungeon of Minturnæ.

MARIUS. THE CIMBRIAN.

MARIUS. What art thou, wretch, that, in the darkness com'st,
The midnight of this prison, with sly step,
Most fit for the assassin, and bared dagger
Gleaming in thy lifted grasp!

CIMBRIAN. I am sent by those
Whose needs demand thy death. A single stroke
Sets us both free forever—thou from Fate,
Me from captivity.

MARIUS. Slave, hast thou heart
To strike at that of Marius!

CIMBRIAN. That voice—that name—
Disarm me; and those fearful eyes that roll,
Like red stars in the darkness, fill my soul
With awe that stays my hand. Master of the world,
The conqueror of my people hast thou been,—
I know thee as a Fate! I cannot harm thee.

MARIUS. Go to thy senders, and from Marius say,
That, if they bare the weapon for my breast,
Let them send hither one who has not yet
Look'd in a master's eye. 'Tis not decreed
That I shall perish yet, or by such hands
As gather in Minturnæ. Get thee hence!

II.

Public Hall of Minturnæ.

MAGISTRATES. THE CIMBRIAN. AUGUR.

CIMBRIAN. I cannot slay this man. Give me to strike
Some baser victim, or restore to me
My chains. I cannot purchase, at such price,
The freedom that I covet.

MAGISTRATE. Yet this man
Conquer'd thy people.

CIMBRIAN. He hath conquer'd me!

AUGUR. And he must conquer still!
His hour is not yet come. The Fates reserve
His weapon for their service. They have need
Of his avenging ministry, to purge
The world of its corruptions. I behold
A fearful vision of the terrible deeds
That wait upon his arm. Let him go free.
Give him due homage; clothe him with fresh robes;
Speed him in secret, with a chosen bark,
To other shores. So shall your city 'scape
Rome's wrath, and his hereafter.

MAGISTRATE. It is well:
This counsel looks like wisdom.

AUGUR. It is more!
So the gods speak through their interpreter.

MAGISTRATE. Release him straightway—send him forth in honor;
We give him freedom—let the gods give safety.

III.

Island of Ænaria.

MARIUS. CETHEGUS.

CETHEGUS. Thou hast slept, Marius.

MARIUS. And thou hast watch'd my sleep;
Ah! truest friend and follower, not in vain!
Dismiss that cloudy trouble from thy brows,
Those doubts that vex thy heart; for know that Fate
Still hath me in its keeping, and decrees
Yet other deeds and conquests at my hand,
And still one glorious triumph. I shall be
Once more, in Rome, a Consul! When a child,
Sporting on summer slopes, beneath old hills,
Seven infant eagles, from a passing cloud,
Dropt clustering in my lap. The Augurs thence
Gave me seven times the Roman Consulate.

CETHEGUS. Thou'st had it six.

MARIUS. One other yet remains.

CETHEGUS. Alas! the Fates but mock thee with a dream;
For know that, while thou slept'st, our treacherous bark
Loosed sail, and left the shores.

MARIUS. Gone!

CETHEGUS. Clean from sight.

MARIUS. Ha! ha! Now thank the gods that watch my sleep,
And save me when the might of man would fail!
Courage, my friend, that vessel speeds to wreck,
Rack'd on some lurking rock beneath the wave,
Or foundering in the tempest. We are safe!

CETHEGUS. Thou'rt confident.

MARIUS. As Fate and Hope can make me.
Yet look! there is an omen. We must fly
This place, for other refuge. See the strife

Betwixt these deadly scorpions on the sands.
CETHEGUS. What read'st thou in this omen?
MARIUS. Sylla's soldiers
Are fast upon our heels. Get to the shore;
Some fisher's boat will help us from the land,
And bear us whither the directing Fates
Decree for refuge—safely o'er the seas
That gulf our treacherous vessel.
CETHEGUS. Be it so!
I follow thee whatever be thy fate!
MARIUS. Hark! dost thou hear?
CETHEGUS. What sound?
MARIUS. The tramp of horse;
And lo! the boat awaits us by the shore!

IV.

Marius, alone, seated among the Ruins of Carthage.

Alone, but not a captive—not o'ercome
By any fate, and reckless of its doom—
Even midst the ruins by his own hand made,
There sits the Exile, lone, but unafraid!
What mighty thoughts, that will not be repress'd,
Warm his wild mood, and swell his laboring breast?—
What glorious memories of the immortal strife
Which gave him fame, and took from Carthage life;
That giant-like, sea rival of his own
Proud realm, still challenging the sway and throne;
Doom'd in long conflict, through experience dread,
To bend the neck at last, to bow the head;
To feel his foot upon her lordly brow,
And yield to him who shares her ruins now!

How, o'er his soul, with passions still that gush'd,
The wondrous past with all its memories rush'd!
These ruins were his monument. They told —
Of wisest strategy, adventure bold,
Dread fields of strife——an issue doubtful long,
That tried his genius, and approved it strong;
That left him robed in conquest, and supreme,
His country's boast, his deeds her brightest theme;
Written in brass and marble—sung in strains
That warm the blood to dances in old veins;
That make young hearts with wild ambition thrill,
And crown the spirit with achieving will;
That seem eternal in the deeds they show,
And waken echoes that survive below;
Brood o'er the mortal, slumbering in the tomb,
And keep his name in song, his works in bloom,
Till envious rivals, hopeless of pursuit,
Join in the homage, who till then were mute;
Catch up the glorious anthem, and unite
To sing the bird they could not match in flight;
Content to honor where they cannot shame,
And praise the worth they cannot rob of fame.

How, with these memories gathering in his breast,
Of all the labors that denied him rest—
Of all the triumphs that his country bore
To heights of fame she had not won before—
Broods he, the exile from his state and home,
On what awaits thee and himself, O Rome!
Of what thy hate deserves, and his decrees,
Whom thou hast brought unwilling to his knees.
No sad submission yields he to his fate,
So long as solace comes to him from hate,
Or hope from vengeance. In his eyes, ye trace

No single look to recompense disgrace;
With no ambition check'd, no passion hush'd,
No pride o'erthrown, no fond delusion crush'd;
With every fire alive that ever sway'd,
His soul as lordly as when most obey'd,
He broods o'er wrongs, remember'd as his own,
And from his heart hears vengeance cry alone.
Fix'd on the ruins round him, his dread eye
Glares, as if fasten'd on his enemy;
His hand is on the fragment of a shrine
That Hate may henceforth deem a thing divine;
Grasp'd firmly—could the fingers but declare
How dread the oath the soul is heard to swear!
The awful purpose, nursed within, denies
Speech to the lips, but lightens up the eyes,
Informs each feeling with the deadliest will,
But, till the murderous moment, bids "be still!"

Come read, ye ministers of Fate, the lore
That fills the dark soul of the fiend ye bore;
Reveal the secret purpose that inspires
That deadly mood, and kindles all its fires;
Scan the dread meaning in that viperous glance
Fix'd on those ruins in intensest trance,
Which nothing speaks to that it still surveys,
And looks within, alone, with meaning gaze.
Unclose the lip, that, rigidly compress'd,
Stops the free rush of feeling from the breast;
And, on that brow, with seven deep furrows bound,
Write the full record of his thought profound.
What future scene beneath that piercing eye
Depicts the carnage and the victory;
The flashing steel—the shaft in fury sped—
The shrieking victim, and the trampled dead?

Say, what wild sounds have spell'd the eager ear,
That stretches wide, the grateful strain to hear;
How many thousands perish in that cry
That fills his bloody sense with melody?
What pleading voices, stifling as they swell,
Declare the vengeance gratified too well?
What lordly neck, beneath that iron tread,
Strangled in utterance, leaves the prayer unsaid?
What horrid scene of triumph and of hate
Do ye discover to this man of Fate,
Which, while his Fortune mocks the hope he bears,
Consoles his Past, and still his Future cheers?

He hath no speech, save in the ruins round;
But there's a language born without a sound,
A voice whose thunders, though unutter'd, fly
From the red lightnings of the deep-set eye;
There passion speaks of hate that cannot spare,
Still tearing those that taught him how to tear;
One dream alone delighting his desire,
The dream that finds the fuel for his fire:—
Let fancy shape the language for his mood,
And speak the purpose burning in his blood.

V.

MARIUS. "If thou hadst tears, O Carthage! for the voice
That speaks among thy ruins, it would cheer
The spirit that was crush'd beneath my heel,
To hear the tongue of thy destroyer swear
To live as thy avenger. I have striven
For Rome against thee, till, in frequent strife,

Thy might was overthrown—thy might as great
As Rome's in days most palmy, save in this:
Thou hadst no soul as potent in thy service,
As I have been in hers. And thou, and all—
The Gaul, the Goth, the Cimbrian—all the tribes
That swell'd the northern torrents, and brought down,
Yearly, the volumed avalanche on Rome—
Have sunk beneath my arm, until, secure,
She sat aloft in majesty, seven-throned,
And knew or fear'd no foe. This was my work—
Nor this alone; from the patrician sway,
That used her as the creature of his will,
I pluck'd her eagles, casting down his power
Beneath plebeian footstep. For long years
Of cruellest oppression and misrule,
I took a merited vengeance on her pride,
Debasing her great sons, that, in their fall,
Her people might be men. I loved her tribes,
Since they were mine. I made their homes secure;
I raised their free condition into state—
And I am here! These ruins speak for me—
An exile—scarr'd with honorable wounds,
At seventy years, alone and desolate!

"But the o'erruling Deities decree
My triumph. From thy ruins comes a voice
Full of most sweet assurance. Hark! it cries,
To me, as thy avenger. Thou forgiv'st
My hand the evil it hath wrought on thee,
That the same hand upon thy conqueror's head
May work like ruin. The atoning Fates
Speak through thy desolation. They declare
That I shall tread the ungrateful city's streets,
Arm'd with keen weapon and consuming fire,

And still unglutted rage. My wrath shall sow
The seeds of future ruin in her heart,
So that her fall, if far less swift than thine,
Shall be yet more complete. She shall consume
With more protracted suffering. She shall pass
Through thousand ordeals of the strife and storm,
Each bitterer than the last—each worse than thine—
A dying that shall linger with its pain,
Its dread anxieties, its torturing scourge,
A period long as life, with life prolong'd,
Only for dire, deservéd miseries.
Her state shall fluctuate through successive years,
With now great shows of pride—with arrogance
That goes before destruction—that her fall
May more increase her shame. The future grows—
Dread characters, as written on a wall—
In fiery lines before me; and I read
The rise of thousands who shall follow me,
Each emulous of vengeance fell as mine,
By mine at first begotten. Yet, why gaze
In profitless survey of the work of years,
Inevitable to the prescient soul,
And leave our own undone? I hear a voice
Reproaching me that I am slow to vengeance;
Me, whom the Fates but spare a few short hours,
That I may open paths to other masters,
For whom they find the scourge. They tutor me
That mine's a present mission; not for me
To traverse the wide future, in pursuit
Of those who shall succeed me in their service,
But to speéd onward in the work of terror,
So that no hungering Fate, the victim ready,
Shall be defrauded of its prey. I rise,
Obeying the deep voice that, from these ruins,

Rings on mine ear its purpose. I obey,
And bound to my performance as the lion,
Long crouching in his jungle, who, at last,
Sees the devoted nigh. The impatient blood
Rounds with red circle all that fills mine eye;
A crimson sea receives me, and I tread
In billows, thus incarnadined, from nations
That bleed through ages thus at every vein.
Be satisfied, ye Fates! Ye gods, who still
Lurk, homeless, in these ruins that ye once
Made sacred as abodes, and deem'd secure,—
I take the sword of vengeance that ye proffer,
And swear myself your soldier. I will go,
And with each footstep on some mighty neck,
Shall work your full revenge, nor forfeit mine!
Dost thou not feel my presence, like a cloud,
Before my coming, Rome?* Is not my spirit,
That goes abroad in earnest of my purpose,
Upon thy slumbers, City of the Tyrant,
Like the fell hag on breast of midnight sleeper,
That loads him with despair? Alone I come;
But thousands of fell ministers shall crowd
About me, with their service—willing creatures
That shall assist me first to work on thee,
And last upon themselves! The daylight fades,
And night belongs to vengeance. I depart,
Carthage, to riot on thy conqueror's heart."

* The reader will be reminded by this passage of that noble and solemn speech made by the Ghost of Sylla, at the opening of Ben Jonson's tragedy of Catiline: "Dost thou not feel me, Rome," etc.

VI.

Silent once more the ruins—dark the night,
Yet vengeance speeds with unembarrass'd flight;
No fears delay, no toils retard the speed
Of that fierce exile, sworn to deadliest deed;
And thou, O Queen of Empires, now secure
Of state that might be peaceful, were it pure,
Too soon thy halls shall echo with the yell
That summons human fiends to works of hell!
Ambition, long unsated, urged by Hate,
Queen of the Nations, speaks thy mournful fate;
Thy valor wasted, and thy might in vain,
Thy virtues sapp'd to break thy despot's chain!
Long didst thou rule, in simple courage strong,
The guardian friend of right, the foe to wrong;
Great in thyself, and conscious of the sway
That kept meet progress with the march of day;
That, from all nations pluck'd the achieving arts,
Which make sway sovereign in a people's hearts;
Proud on thy heights rose forms to worship dear,
There swell'd the temple's crest, the column there,
Each with its chronicle to spell the soul,
And each most precious to the crowning whole;
A world thyself—a wondrous world—that made
The admiring nations silent in thy shade;
Genius and Art commingling in thy cause,
And gods presiding o'er thy matchless laws.

VII.

But dark the hour impends—the storm is nigh,
And thy proud eagles flaunt no more the sky;
Thou hast not kept thy virtues to the last,
And all thy glories centre in thy past—
Thy safety in thy glories. From beneath
Thine altars swells the midnight cry of death;
The tocsin summons—not to brave the foe,
But to make bare thy bosom to the blow;
From thy own quiver flies the shaft of doom,
And thy own children hollow out thy tomb.
The exulting shouts that mock thee in thy shame,
Were those that led thee once to heights of fame:
The bird that swoops to riot on thy breast,
Is the same eagle that made great thy nest.
Hark! at his shrilly scream the sleuth-hounds wake,
The bloody thirst which in thy heart they slake;
Thy proud patricians, hunted down, survey
The herds they kept, most busy with the prey.
These are the flocks they foster'd from their foes,
And these are first to drink the blood that flows.
Wondrous the arts of vengeance, to inspire
The madden'd son to prey upon the sire!
Wondrous the skill *that* fierce plebeian wields
To make this last the bloodiest of his fields.
Vain all thy prayer and struggle—thou art down—
His iron footstep planted on thy crown;
But in thy fate, 'tis something for thy pride,
Thus self-destroy'd, thou mighty suicide!

BERTRAM:

AN ITALIAN SKETCH.

I.

SCENE: *The Dungeon of Bertram in the Castle of Leoni.*

LEONI. BERTRAM.

LEONI. Thou sleep'st as one who hath no fear—no grief!

BERTRAM. As one who hath no fear; and, for my griefs,
That they permit me sleep at such an hour,
Would show them much more merciful than thou!

LEONI. I, too, am merciful—will bring thee sleep,
So deep, as will shut out all sense of grief
From thy unlaboring senses.

BERTRAM. Be it soon!

LEONI. Is this thy prayer?

BERTRAM. Dost ask?

LEONI. Enough! Then hear!
To-morrow thou shalt have no charge in life—
The fair sky shall reject thee; the bright sun
Lend thee no succor—and the wooing breeze,
That sweeps so sweetly through yon window grate,
Shall only stir the long grass on thy grave!
Dost hear what I have spoken? Thou shalt die!

BERTRAM. 'Tis well!

LEONI. No more?

BERTRAM. What more wouldst have? Thy power

To which I may oppose nor prayer nor pleading,
Needs not my vain acknowledgment of grief;—
And fears I have none.

LEONI. Is all sense of hope
Utterly dead within thee? Does no dream
Rise up before thy fancies, fraught with pleasure,
That life prolong'd may bring thee—happiest hours,
In sunshine or in shade—such as thy bosom
Was once most blest to dream of? Thou hast been
A very bird of the summer, in thy flight,
No less than music. Thou couldst clip the air
With ever-glad embraces; couldst delight
The groves with the spring sweetness of thy song,
And fed'st on all the flowery fields of life,
With never satiate appetite and hope!—
Is thy privation nothing?—the great loss
Of the things visible and glorious, thou
Hast ever sought with such a fresh delight?
The woods and waters—this fair earth and sky,
Glowing in birds and blossoms; and the night
Proud in its starr'd luxuriance; and that moon,
Whose pallid disk looks mournful through yon bars,
As if to yield thee sympathy. A while,
Her beams will gleam upon thy silent grave,
And seek thee through the grasses on its slopes,
And thou know nothing.

BERTRAM. Be it as thou sayest.

LEONI. I tell thee, by the morrow thou shalt sleep
I' the iron grasp of death.

BERTRAM. One word for all!
Time ceased with me to-day—and in *her* grave
Sleep all my earthly morrows.

LEONI. Obdurate!
Yet would a prayer become thee.

BERTRAM. Not to thee!
My prayers are not for life—nor yet for death—
And, if for mercy, but to Him, whose power
Leads through the awful future, in whose shadows
I see no sway of thine! Thou couldst not answer
To any prayer I make thee.

LEONI. Not for life?

BERTRAM. No!
Life were no mercy now. The light which made
My life on earth, now beckons through the gates
Which thou mayst ope, not shut! Thou hast o'erstept
The limits of thy policy. Thy power,
That smote too soon the victim in thy grasp,
Forever lost its sway, in the foul blow,
That rather spoke the madness of thy hate,
Than made its purpose sure. For prayer of mine,
Invoking life for *me*, denied to *her*,
Thou wait'st but vainly. Not to mock thy power
Do I contemn thy mercy; but that blessing
Were now no boon to me. I hear the doom
Thy lips have spoken, and I welcome it!—
Will meet it with no struggle and no prayer,
But, in such meek humility of heart—
Not reft of every hope—which best becomes
These bonds, this weakness—conscious that I breathe
In thy forbearance only. Let the axe
Be sharpen'd and in readiness—the neck
Is bared, and bent already, for the blow!

LEONI. Die in thy pride! I would have wrung the prayer
From thy unnatural bosom, to deny thee;
Would first have moved thee to an abject homage,
That shame, as well as death, might fasten on thee,
Defiling thy past honors; and have shown thee,
Clipping with eager arms about my knees,

While my feet tramp thee to the kindred dust
Which stains thy insolent forehead.

BERTRAM. Oh! I know thee!

LEONI. Thou know'st me! Well! it needs not that I tell thee
Thy doom is written! With the sun, thou diest!

II.

BERTRAM—*solus.*

BERTRAM. I will not shame his brightness! He will blaze
For other seasons. He will bring their fruits,
And cheer to song the throats of merry birds,
And ripen yellow harvests for the race,
In multitudinous lands; and I shall lose
These joys, which never fail'd till now to gladden
This weary heart of mine! But now their sweets
Bring me no hope; nor, with their sweets denied,
Do I feel loss. 'Twas in her love that grew
The season's bounty—and the glorious smile
That bless'd me in the rising of the sun,
And cheer'd me in the music of the bird,
And charm'd me in the beauty of the flower,
And taught me, in the fragrance-blessing earth,
The way to countless blessings, which no more
I find in earth or sky, in song of birds,
Beauty in flowers, or glory in the day!
My day is night: my prayer is for that sleep
That sees no more the day from which is gone
The soul's one beauty, giving charm to all!
Nor is the night which now approacheth fast—
Through which my feet must go—the final night,

Whose coming makes men falter, with a fear
That, in the unknown, still dreads the worst of knowledge—
Without its welcoming light! I have o'ercome
The natural fears of death,—which, in our youth,
Must ever be a Terror! Doubt and dread
Grow passive, in that weariness of soul
When life maintains no hope; and death puts on
The aspect of a friend to him who feels
How toilsome and how endless is the day
Consumed without a quest, through barren realms
That Love hath ceased to brighten with his beams,
Or freshen with his flowers. My woes, that brought
Despair for one dread season, and dismay
That still o'erwhelms my heart, hath also taught
Elsewhere to seek the Comforter! And Fear,
That found on earth but Tyranny, beyond,
Looks upward for protection. He whom Power
Drives from the shelter of the Throne, finds strength
In the more steadfast Altar; and the man,
Who knew no safety with his kindred fellow,
Soon finds the need of Him, who, throned apart,
Repairs the wretched sorrows of the race,—
Rebukes the injustice—from the oppressor plucks
The scourge—and to the victim, soon or late,
Atones for the worst sufferings born on earth.
Oh! Death shall be no pang, though sharp his blow;—
And loss of life, however glad before
In bloom and blossom, bring no sorrow now!

And yet, to tread that passage of thick gloom
Into the world of doubt! To take that plunge,
From consciousness, to the bewildering change
Which may be woe, or apathy still worse,
In loss of that large consciousness, whose hope

Clings to the soul as to its only life,
Secure in joyous certainty of wings,—
High powers, that yield not to the outward pressure,
And, with the will, ne'er-pausing progress keep
To the mind's best achievements! Oh! that doubt!—
Whether, in passage from the state we know,
We rise elsewhere erect, or grow to nothing;
Never know waking—with one pang lose feeling;
Lose, with the sky and earth, all sense and seeing—
The *all* that we have lived for—while the loved one,
Most precious to the heart of all affections,
Lies silently beside us, and we know not!—
Hush'd each divinest instinct that, while living,
Taught us, unseen, of the approaching footstep,
And, with a breath, infusing still the zephyr,
Quicken'd each pulse within the trembling bosom
With intimations of that precious spirit
So natural to our own. Oh! my Francesca!
Where glid'st thou?—through what region, breathing glory—
Through what sweet gardens of delight and treasure,—
That I behold thee not?—and drink no promise
Of what awaits me in the world hereafter,
From the sweet whispers of thy passing spirit,
Stealing beside me? Thou art freed the struggle,
And, in the unlimited province of thy wing,
Why fly'st thou far?—why bring'st me no sweet tidings
To strengthen the dear hope that gave us courage,
When we were torn asunder—made us fearless
Of all the tyrant might decree against us—
Assured of that blest future which his power
Might never enter? Wert thou nigh—about me—
Infusing, with thy sweetness, the damp vapor
That chills this gloomy dungeon—I had known it!
My soul had felt thy presence, as one gathers

The scent of flowers that grow in foreign gardens,
Whose blooms he doth not see! Didst thou look on me,
I should not droop this hour. Oh! wouldst thou speak,
I should not feel this dungeon—dread this death—
That, in thy absence from my spirit now—
Thine freed—takes on a shape of during darkness,
That never hopes a dawn! Who comes?

III.

FRIAR. BERTRAM.

FRIAR. My son!

BERTRAM. Art thou mine executioner?

FRIAR. Thy saviour rather—
If I might execute upon thy pride,
Thy sinful thoughts and passions, and thy fears,
By bringing thee, in penitence and sorrow,
To the white feet of Him who came to save,
And perish'd, for thy safety, on the cross!
O son! the moments leave thee. A few hours
Is all the remnant of the time allow'd thee.
I would prepare thee for the terrible change
The morrow brings thee—would entreat thy prayers—
The meek repentance of thy evil passions,
And not less evil thoughts—and such confession
Of each foul secret festering in thy soul,
With the due sorrows which should follow it,
As may commend thee to the Saviour's grace,
And make thee fit for the Eternal Presence!

BERTRAM. Behold me then most guilty. Pride was mine,
And sinful thoughts, and dark imaginings,
And reckless passions, and ungracious fancies,

And all the thousand tendencies to evil
Which ever urge the impatient soul of man
To heedless forfeiture of Heaven's sweet mercy.
What need the dark detail—the nice relation—
The name and character of each offence,
Too numerous quite for name, for recollection—
Too foul for the now blushing consciousness
To summon into sight, or give to speech!
Enough, that I have sinn'd—that, in my sorrow,
I could weep tears of blood; and that I perish
Forgiving all mine enemies—imploring
Of all forgiveness—and of God, o'er all!—
Most doubtful of his mercy, as well knowing
How great mine undesert.

FRIAR. Alas! my son,
This will not answer thee. Thou must disburden
Thy heart of each dark secret. 'Tis thy pride,
And not the shame and grief of thy contrition,
That locks thy secret up!

BERTRAM. I have no secrets
From God, to whom for judgment I must go;
No hope from man, of whom I have no fear,
And no confession for his ears, whose judgment
Can do me hurt or service now no more.

FRIAR. Beware, my son! This stubbornness! This woman—
Francesca—who hath perish'd in her guilt—
She was to thee no wife? Her full confession—

BERTRAM. Ah! now I know thee! Get thee to Leoni:
I have no secrets for thy keeping, father,
Or thy revealing. Yet a prayer I make thee;
Leave me to God—in quiet.

FRIAR. If I leave thee—
Thy conscience unrelieved—the truth unspoken—

I leave thee to the enemy of man,
Who lurks in waiting for thy soul—

BERTRAM. Away!

FRIAR. The curse—

BERTRAM. Oh! fit for curses only—hence!
Thou hast usurp'd the white wings of the dove,
To do the serpent's office! Who is there?

IV.

FRANCESCA. BERTRAM. FRIAR.

BERTRAM. Ah! now is Heaven most merciful! She comes!
She glides, a form of light, athwart the darkness;
I see her radiant beauties, starr'd by Heaven
With supernatural brightness; and I feel
The lightness of a breath, that's balm for angels,
Uplift me as with wings! Oh! blessed being,
That hallowest where thou com'st—how doth thy presence
Prepare me for the sacrifice! One moment;
I shut mine eyes in doubt! I open them
Once more to rapture! Dost thou see, old man?
Thy lips had spoken curses as from Heaven—
Lo! now, its angel!

FRANCESCA, [*to the Friar.*] Hence, father, to Leoni.

BERTRAM. Leoni! Can she speak of him—Leoni!

FRANCESCA, [*to the Friar.*] He summons thee! He needs thee! Hence with speed!

FRIAR. Then hast thou answer'd wisely. All goes well!
I leave thee.

FRANCESCA, [*to the Friar.*] Hence!

V.

FRANCESCA. BERTRAM.

BERTRAM. Is it Francesca speaks—
And speaks she of Leoni? Thou wert mine,
Francesca—and in robes elect of heaven,
Speak'st thou of him who was thy enemy,
As he is mine? I tremble, with a dread
That tears my very heart-strings! Oh! Francesca,
Pure spirit of the purest of earth's mortals,
Speak, and uplift me, with a voice of mercy,
From this dark sphere to thine.

FRANCESCA. Bertram!

BERTRAM. That name!
Which still was the dear burden of thy lips
When thou wast mine, and mortal—sounds to me
As thou hast ever said it. There's no change,
To eye or ear, in thee. O heart! be hopeful;
Since death makes free the living to their mission,
Nor robs the loved one of those precious beauties
That fashion'd thought and sense, and fiery passion,
To one sweet frame of love!

FRANCESCA. Dost think me dead,
Dear Bertram?

BERTRAM. Dead, my Francesca—dead to earth—
But oh! not dead to me! They show'd thee to me,
Even through these grates, array'd in innocent white,
And robed as for a bridal with the stars,
In pure white blossoming flowers.

FRANCESCA. They mock'd thine eyes,
As they have mock'd my ears. I am not dead . . .
I live as thou hast known me. I am thine,
As still I was before; but, rouse thee briefly,

For we have little space. Reserve thy wonder
Till we go hence in safety. We must fly—
While the dread baron sleeps. Leoni sleeps—
Sleeps soundly! I have left his bed but now!

BERTRAM. Thou! Left *his* bed but now!

FRANCESCA. Marvel not, Bertram,
However marvellous all seemings be
That check us in this dungeon. Thou shalt know
The dark, dread truth hereafter.

BERTRAM. Left his bed!
His bed! The lustful murderer—the foul satyr,
Whose very eye but taints the thing it looks on,
Whose very breath is incense of pollution,
Whose very touch is sin! O God! I hearken
And live! He lives! . . . She lives! Francesca—mine!—
All live! Yet hath she left his bed but now!—
Death! death! O friend! where art thou? I had lost
The sense of fear! I lived but for one hope—
That the short, rapid interval of time
'Twixt this impatient consciousness, and that
Which made my faith assurance absolute,
Of life with thee hereafter—would be o'er,
With but one shock—one moment of thick darkness—
And then all light and rapture!—and I wake,
To feel the scorpion sting of agony,
That tells me of the death that follows death,
In which all hope lies buried—smother'd sure
In loss of that most precious of life's fancies,
Its dream of the pure angel, whit'st of all
Above the cloudy confines of the grave,
Waiting with welcome! Death! Oh, death! Oh, terror!
That I should live for this!—that thou shouldst tell me,
Francesca, with no crimson on thy cheek,
No gushing eyes, no husky, tremulous voice,

That thou com'st freshly from Leoni's bed,
No longer fresh—yet living! [*Falls on his face.*

FRANCESCA. Were thy fears—
Thy dark suspicions true, oh! cruel Bertram,
How vain were tears or tremors, conscious blushes,
Or all the broken agonies of speech,
To show my shame or thine!

BERTRAM. Yet didst thou leave
Leoni's bed but now! Thy own lips said it,
Nor falter'd in the speech.

FRANCESCA. Oh! had I left
My virtues on his bed, there had been need
For faltering and for tears. I left his bed,
But left no living bed, my Bertram! No!
Look on this dagger—let it speak for me!

BERTRAM. It bleeds—it drops with blood. The crimson edges
Gleam brightly dark before me. Oh! Francesca,
I see what thou hast done—yet, do not say it!
I feel the terrible need that stood before thee,
And comprehend the fate that forced upon thee
The dreadful stroke of death. And yet, Francesca,
I would it had been any hand but thine
To do this deed! [*Covering his eyes.*

FRANCESCA. Thy life was on it, Bertram—
And mine—and something more to me than life;
And, in my soul, a voice that cried—"Be cruel,
Or thou art lost to Bertram and to Heaven!"
Thou hat'st—thou fear'st me! Ah! I see it, Bertram!

BERTRAM. Hate thee, Francesca? No! How much I love thee,
No words may speak. Yet there's a deadly horror
That shakes my frame—that seizes on my heart!
Look how thy hand is crimsoned!—up thine arm,
Even to thine elbow, drips the clotting current!

God! what a terrible stroke! *Thou* didst *not* do't—
Thou once so gentle, whom a wounded sparrow
Had brought to feminine sorrows. Thou hast wept
The fate of the cucuyo when I brush'd it,
To loss of wing and glitter, from thy garments;
And not a beggar's babe, with plaint of hunger,
But, with thy bounty, won a boon of tears,
Sweet as the angels weep o'er woes of mortals;
And thou to strike this blow! I'll not believe it;
Some other hand than thine, Francesca!

FRANCESCA. Mine!
Mine only, Bertram. Do not curse or chide me;
Turn not thy face away. 'Twas for thy safety.

BERTRAM. As if Death had one terror in his keeping,
To wound a fear of mine!

FRANCESCA. Yet, have a thought
Of poor Francesca's danger. See her struggles,
At midnight, in the darkness, with her tyrant;
That bold, bad man, with all his power around him!
Hear her wild shrieks, which all refused to hear:
How vain were all her pleadings! How the danger
Threaten'd the whiteness of her innocent bosom,
That knew no claim but thine; and think how madly
The spasms of fear and horror in my soul
Impell'd the deadly weapon to the heart,
Grown viperous with its lusts—its snakes about me,
Ready to sting with deathsome leprosies!
Oh! think of this, my Bertram!

BERTRAM. My Francesca,
Dost think I blame thee! 'Twas a fate that made thee
Thus stern and fearful; yet, to me, thy beauties
Were those of meekness only. In mine eyes,
Thy mould was still of those celestial beings
That find their virtues in their tenderness,

Chasten'd by love to purity. All passions
Grew modest in thy presence. Every feeling
That minister'd to make thy loveliness,
Seem'd to have had its birth in angel meekness,
That spread a hallowing moonlight at its coming,
Making the rugged soft. How could I know thee,
Thus terribly incarnadined with vengeance
For any purpose! Could I dream of thee,
Thus robed in crimson horrors, and believe thee
The pure white thing thou wast, when first I found thee
In groves of green Val d' Arno, singing sweetly,
With eyes of dewy glistening, to pale sisters
That watch'd above in fondness? Oh! thy nature
Hath been o'erwrought to madness! May I fold thee
Once more to this lone bosom, and remember
The thing thou wast, but art not?

FRANCESCA. Let me save thee,
Even though I lose thee, Bertram.

BERTRAM. Lose me, never!
The flight that saves thy Bertram—

FRANCESCA. Saves not me,
Since thus he holds me alter'd—if he alters
In the dear faith he gave me. The worst death
Grows up before me, though we fly together,
In these so foreign glances—in this speech
That tells how much he loses in the change
That outraged what I was, and, in my terrors,
Made me achieve the deed, however needful,
That makes me thus a terror to his love.
Yet must we fly. These keys undo thy fetters—
See how they fall about thee! Rouse thee, Bertram!
Thy hands, thy feet are free. Thy tyrant sleeps,
No more to cross thy fortunes; and Francesca,
If stain'd with blood, is pure for thee, as ever

In happy vale of Arno. Yet I ask not
That thou shouldst deem me so—that thou shouldst love me,
As then, in those sweet hours.

BERTRAM. I've done thee wrong
By this ungrateful chiding. I will take thee,
As all-confiding to this hopeful bosom
As when thy hands were innocently white.
We'll fly together. I am thine, Francesca,
Never to wrong thy hearing with a thought
That love may deem rebuke. Let us away!

FRANCESCA, (*aside.*) Yet is the thought the shadow to the soul,
Though never shown by speech. My doom is written
In the deep horror which his spirit feels,
At what this hand hath done. Oh! in the future,
I see the icy dread—I hear the accent
That speaks the chill'd affection—forced and idle,
As born no more of fondness. I must perish,
In the denial of the love which made me,
At first, a breathing woman. I must perish;
Yet, to the last, in loving him, I cherish
The hope, that when the ice-bolt falls between
Our lives, our hearts shall reunite once more,
And death retrieve the whiteness life hath lost.

BERTRAM. Why lingerest thou, Francesca?

FRANCESCA. But for prayer!—
Heaven's mercy may be yielded to our flight
If not our hearts. Dear Bertram, let me lead thee;
But take the dagger—I will bear the keys!

BERTRAM. Oh! give it me; far better graced in mine,
Than in thy hands, Francesca. Give it me!
O heart! 'tis my infirmity that speaks—
But I could easier strike a host of hearts,
Than see it in thy grasp! And yet, Francesca,

I would not wrong thee by reproach. Thy danger
Made the dread weapon a necessity
Thou couldst not 'scape, and shouldst not. Let my arm
Enfold thee; and should danger threaten now,
Thine eye shall see this arm more red than thine,
In shielding thy white bosom.

FRANCESCA, (*timidly.*) May I hold
Thy hand, my Bertram?

BERTRAM. Heart and hand, Francesca. [*Embracing.*

FRANCESCA. Now could I go to death!

BERTRAM. We go to life,
To love and safety, dear one!

FRANCESCA, (*aside.*) Through a night,
Where all is cloud before me, never-lifting
Till the last cloud descends. Oh! love no longer,
As once we knew it—wings and sunniness,
With music in the pauses of the breeze,
While leaves drop down in odors; but a love
That chills while it embraces—and sweet accents
That never warm to meaning.

BERTRAM. What say'st thou?

FRANCESCA. Of cold and darkness, Bertram.

BERTRAM. Soon, the light
Will gather round us with its cheerful aspects,
That smile among the stars; and Heaven's fresh breathings—
'Scaped from the pestilent atmosphere of death—
Will lift our spirits with a glad surprise.
The bolts unclose! Oh! see you not, Francesca,
How swiftly darts the messenger of light,
As glad to do us service, o'er the threshold,
And waves his glow-worm torch to guide us on;
While the fond zephyr, through the yawning portal,
Wraps us in sweet embrace, and bears us forward
On wings made free like his? Come forth, Francesca!

FRANCESCA, (*faltering.*) Whither?

BERTRAM. To life—from death!—Dost see?

FRANCESCA. The blessed stars!

BERTRAM. Now fly we with the urgent feet of fear;
This valley must not hold us. To our hills:
There we may breathe in safety. But thou shrink'st!

FRANCESCA. The light! They see—the stars! These bloody proofs—

BERTRAM, (*averting his eyes.*) And I—alas!

FRANCESCA. Lead where thou wilt, my Bertram.

BERTRAM. Among the hills! I know where runs a brooklet,
Shall cleanse thee of these stains—Jesu! how black!

FRANCESCA. How black! how black! (*aside.*) Alas! the stream may cleanse—
The arm be white once more as when he took it
To wrap about his breast!—but oh! my heart,
The dread impression fasten'd on his soul,
Leaves only night to mine! I follow, Bertram!

BERTRAM, (*aside.*) How terrible! How had she heart for it!
So fearful, even in her innocent ways,
So tender still, and merciful!

FRANCESCA. Thou speak'st?

BERTRAM. Of the great debt I owe thee—of the struggle
That nerved thee to this blow! And yet, Francesca,
Would we had died before—together died—
Even at the moment when our lips first met
In love's first sweet delirium!

FRANCESCA. Thou art right!
Would we had died, O Bertram! in that hour,
And had not lived for this!—Would *I* had died!

THE DEATH OF CLEOPATRA.

AUGUSTUS CÆSAR. DOLABELLA.

AUGUSTUS. Dead! say'st thou? Cleopatra?
DOLABELLA. She sleeps fast—
Will answer nothing more—hath no more lusts
For passion to persuade—nor art to breed
Any more combats. I have seen her laid—
As for a bridal—in a pomp of charms,
That mock'd the flashing jewels in her crown
With beauty never theirs. Her bridegroom one
Who conquers more than Cæsar—a grim lord
Now in the full'st possession of his prize,
Who riots on her sweets; seals with cold kiss
The precious caskets of her eyes, that late
Held—baiting fond desire with hope of spoil—
Most glorious gems of life; and, on her cheek,
Soft still with downy ripeness—not so pale,
As sudden gush of fancy in the heart
Might bring to virgin consciousness—he lays
His icy lip, that fails to cause her shrink
From the unknown soliciting. Her sleep
Dreams nothing of the embrace, the very last
Her eager and luxurious form may know,
Of that dread ravisher.
AUGUSTUS. If it be true,
She still hath baffled me. My conquest sure—

My triumph incomplete! I had borne her else,
The proudest trophy of a myriad spoil,
In royal state to Rome. Give me to know
The manner of her death.

DOLABELLA. By her own hands!—
That, conscious still, commended to her breast
The fatal kiss of Nile's envenom'd asp;
That subtle adder, which, from slime and heat,
Receives a gift of poison, whose least touch
Is a sure stoppage of the living tides.

AUGUSTUS. Her death commends her more than all her life!
'Twas like a queen—fit finish to a state,
That, in its worst excess, passionate and wild,
Had still a pomp of majesty, too proud
For mortal subjugation! She had lusts
Most profligate of harm—but with a soul
That, under laws of more restraint, had raised
Her passions into powers, which might have borne
Best fruits for the possessor. They have wrought
Much evil to her nature; but her heart
Cherish'd within a yearning sense of love
That did not always fail; and, where she set
The eye of her affections, her fast faith
Kept the close bond of obligation sure.
This still should serve, when censure grows most free,
To sanctify her fault. In common things
Majestic, as in matters of more state,
She had, besides, the feminine arts to make
Her very lusts seem noble; and, with charms
That mock'd all mortal rivalry, she knew
To dress the profligate graces in her gift—
Generous to very wantonness, and free
Of bounty, where Desert might nothing claim—
That Virtue's self might doubt of her own shape,

So lovely grew her counterfeit. O'er all,
Her splendor, and her soul's magnificence,
The pomp that crown'd her state—luxurious shows—
Where Beauty, grown subservient to a sway
That made Art her first vassal—these, so twinn'd
With her voluptuous weakness—did become
Her well, and took from her the hideous hues
That else had made men loathe!
I would have seen
This princess ere she died! How looks she now?

DOLABELLA. As one who lives, but sleeps; no change to move
The doubts of him who sees, yet nothing knows,
Of that sly, subtle enemy, which still
Keeps harbor round her heart. Charmian, her maid,
Had, ere I enter'd, lidded up the eyes,
That had no longer office; and she lay,
With each sweet feature harmonizing still,
As truly with the nature as at first,
When Beauty's wide-world wonder she went forth
Spelling both art and worship! Never did sleep
More slumberous, more infant-like, give forth
Its delicate breathings. You might see the hair
Wave, in stray ringlets, as the downy breath
Lapsed through the parted lips; and dream the leaf,
Torn from the rose and laid upon her mouth,
Was wafted by that zephyr of the soul
That still kept watch within—waiting on life
In ever anxious ministry. Lips and brow—
The one most sweetly parted as for song—
The other smooth and bright, even as the pearls
That, woven in fruit-like clusters, hung above,
Starring the raven curtains of her hair—
Declared such calm of happiness as never
Her passionate life had known. No show of pain—

No writhéd muscle—no distorted cheek—
Deform'd the beautiful picture of repose,
Or spoke the unequal struggle, when fond life
Strives with its dread antipathy. Her limbs
Lay pliant, with composure, on the couch,
Whose draperies loosely fell about her form,
With gentle flow, and natural fold on fold,
Proof of no difficult conflict. There had been,
Perchance, one pang of terror, when she gave
Free access to her terrible enemy;
Or, in the moment when the venomous chill
Went sudden to her heart; for, from her neck,
The silken robes had parted. The white breast
Lay half revealed, save where the affluent hair
Stream'd over it in thick dishevell'd folds,
That ask'd no further care. Oh! to behold,
With eye still piercing to the sweet recess,
Where rose each gentle slope, that seem'd to swell
Beneath mine eye, as conscious of my gaze,
And throbbing with emotion soft as strange,
Of love akin to fear! Thus swelling still,
Like little billows on some happy sea,
They sudden seem'd to freeze, as if the life
Grew cold when all was loveliest. One blue vein
Skirted the white curl of each heaving wave,
A tint from some sweet sunbow, such as life
Flings ever on the cold domain of death;
And, at their equal heights, two ruby crests—
Two yet unopen'd buds from the same flower—
Borne upward by the billows rising yet,
Grew into petrified gems!—with each an eye
Eloquent pleading to the passionate heart,
For all of love it knows! Alas! the mock!
That Death should mask himself with loveliness,

And Beauty have no voice, in such an hour,
To warn its eager worshipper. I saw—
And straight forgot, in joy of what I saw,
What still I knew—that Death was in my sight,—
And what was seeming beautiful, was but
The twilight—the brief interval betwixt
The glorious day and darkness. I had kiss'd
The wooing bliss before me; but, even then,
Crawl'd forth the venomous reptile from the folds
Where still it harbor'd—crawl'd across that shrine
Of Beauty's best perfections, which, meseem'd,
To shrink and shudder 'neath its loathly march,
Instinct, with all the horrors at my heart.

AUGUSTUS. Thus Guilt and Shame deform the Beautiful!

SAUL AT ENDOR.

A SCRIPTURE LEGEND.

The sun was dark in Israel! O'er the land
Spread, like a cloud, Philistia's hosts;—and Saul
Grew hopeless as he felt the light of heaven,
God's countenance, withdrawn. His pride of heart,
And insolent presumption, had o'erborne
The favor of his Sovereign. He had stood,
Resting on strength of will, and mortal powers,
And reckless of the warnings, night and day,
Vouchsafed, through holiest prophets, from on high;
Till sacred wrath o'erflow'd, and, from his hope,
Drew all its smiles and succor. O'er his soul
The cloud was dark, like that above the land;
Nor knew he whither, seeking light, to turn,
In the bewildering mazes of his fear.
Vainly he pray'd to Heaven. The usual signs
Denied him answer. In his dreams, no voice
Declared indulgence for the profligate heart,
So long a trespasser. Nor Urim spoke,
Nor prophet, to his pleadings: all were dumb.
And still the tempest grew before his eyes—
The twofold tempest of his mortal fear,
The outcast, he, of Heaven, in wrath denied—
And that which threaten'd, with as dark a doom,

His hapless people—o'er whose cities sped
The fierce invaders. They possess'd the land,
To Shunem, and in multitudes o'erawed
The brave in Israel. Trembling, as he saw
Their darkening hosts, he gather'd his array,
And pitch'd his tents in Gilboa. But the fear—
The feeling, like an instinct—which possess'd
His people, that the favor of their God
Their king no more might challenge—that he stood
The surely-doomed of Heaven—o'er all their hearts
Spread terror like a spell; and, with their king,
They look'd away from their dread enemy,
As seeking succor from the East and West,
Where succor there was none. In terror, then,
The monarch—of his fears, as of their own,
Now fully conscious—in himself no more
Assured, as in his days of innocence,
And hopeless of all answer from the God
His stubborn will had outraged—turn'd his eyes,
Seeking forbidden agencies—the powers
Of darkness—for that knowledge of the truth,
The powers of light withheld.
"Seek me out one,"
He said unto his servants, "some woman that hath
A spirit familiar, whose intelligence
May answer to my quest."
They led him forth,
By night, in base disguise, until he came
To Endor, where a woman secretly
Pursued her dark, abominable trade,
Defying heaven, and mocking human law,
Which still denounced, with deadly penalty,
The practice loathed of God. With trembling feet,
He cross'd the threshold of evil, and beheld

The loathly one he sought. No stately rites
Embellish'd her sad service. Lowly place
She kept, for the reception of a king,
And the responses of her dubious gods.
But knew she not the monarch—a sure proof
How vain was the pretension of her craft
To supernatural knowledge.
"Show to me,"
He said, "by the familiar at thy beck,
Him I shall name to thee!"
A prudent fear
Possess'd her:—
"Wouldst thou spread for me a snare?
By what should I divine, and with what plea,
When, as thou knowest, that Israel's king hath slain
Such as divined by spirits? Wizard and witch
Hath he cut off, in vengeance, from the land;
And seek'st thou for my life?"
"As the Lord liveth,
I seek thee with no snare! Pursue thy art—
Bring me up him whom I shall name to thee,
And profit shall be thine, not punishment."
"Whom wouldst thou?"
"Samuel, prophet of the Lord!"
With lowly heart, the monarch bow'd himself
Before strange altars; hooded his proud head
Submissive, and in anxious waiting, knelt,
While the weird woman, with her mystic rites,
Evoked the awful dead. Her subtle spells,
Sustain'd by potent but still evil powers,
Meant to evoke a semblance, and delude,
By magical presentments and blear shades,
Sufficient for the heart of humble fear,
Grew to a greater power, beneath the will

Of the Most High! He, with a terrible truth,
Responded to the summons that was meant
For the inferior deities. Instead
Of the gross mockery of the sainted shade,
Samuel himself arose; but with such state
Of mightiest angels issuing from the void,
That the weird woman bow'd herself, in dread
Of the true God, whose living rites she mock'd.
Then sank her heart with terror, as she knew
Such answer to such summons well declared
The monarch in her guest. To less than he,
Or in less straits, would Heaven accord a voice
Of such acknowledgment? She cried aloud:—
"Thou hast betray'd me; thou art Saul himself!
Thou whose keen sword hath swept, with glutless rage,
The wizard tribes from Israel!"

"Have no fear,"

The monarch reassured her. "Thou art safe
From sword of Israel's ruler. In his need
He seeks thee now, whom once he will'd to slay,
Having no refuge in a holier shrine,
And a more certain oracle. What seest,
That shakes thee with such terror?"

"Gods, that rise—

True gods, ascending from the depths of earth!—
And now an aged man, from head to foot
Clad in a mantle."

"It is Samuel!"

And, as he spoke, headlong, and cowering low,
The king crouch'd humbly at the spectre's feet:—
The mantle fell—the prophet stood reveal'd!
Dread was the moment's pause that follow'd then:
The woman abash'd, and stricken with awe the king,
In the oppressive shadow of the dead.

Not long the silence—when the prophet spake:—
"Why hast thou vex'd the quiet of my sleep;
Thou, whose deaf ear unto my living word
Gave little tendance? Wherefore dost thou now,
Too lately, from the silence of the grave
Entreat my counsel?"

The familiar sounds
Of that remember'd teacher, sought too late,
Fell with rebuking, but in gentle tones,
On the king's senses. In his grief, he cried:—
"'Tis in my woe, in sore distress of heart,
That Saul now seeks for Samuel. Holiest man,
Too coldly heard when counsel had been worth,
I look to thee for succor. O'er the land
Spread our Philistine enemies. They rage,
In confidence of heavenly help withdrawn
From Israel, by the madness of her king;
And Israel, with a terror, of this fear
Born wholly, weeps and trembles in his tents.
Thou gone, and God against me, 'tis in vain
I seek the voice of Heaven from midnight dreams,
And prophets known for good. They fail me all;
And, in the bitterness of my blank despair,
I seek the wizard arts that rob the grave
To teach the living wisdom. Unto thee,
That first upon this head pour'd sacred oil,
I make appeal. O Samuel! man beloved,
And ever dear to Heaven, in this dread strait,
Show me the way of safety for my people,
Though Saul may plead in vain. On thee I call
For counsel in this peril."

"Why to me,
Since God hath grown thine enemy? To Him!
Yet vainly wouldst thou plead against thy fate:

The evil is upon thee, long foreshown:
Thou hadst thy day of warning. From these lips
Went forth the proper oracles of God,
That told thee thou wert wanting: that thy realm
Should pass from out thy keeping, and thy crown
Descend to him thou still hast sought with hate—
The noble son of Jesse. He hath still
Obey'd the precepts of the living God,
And not as thou, outraging, with a will,
The fix'd decrees of Heaven. Thou didst contemn
His bidding, when thou dared spare Amalek,
On whom He swore to execute all wrath!
For this, the trouble of this day is thine,
And yet another day. To-morrow's sun
Shall set upon thy fortunes. Israel's hosts
Shall fail before the Philistines, and, ere night,
Thou with thy sons, O Saul! shalt be with me."

The voice had ceased! The awful form was gone;
But the dread prophecy was ringing still
In the appall'd one's ears. Then fell the king
Prostrate, as one who, sudden shorn of strength,
Sinks helpless on his shadow, in a heap!

SAUL'S LAST BATTLE.

The heroic soul still struggles against fate,
And, arm'd with self-devotion, finds resolve
For struggle in despair. Prepared for death,
And hopeless for himself, the soul of Saul,
Though counsell'd from the grave of sore defeat,
Still nursed the dream that God would succor yet
The fortunes of his people. They had sinn'd,
But he, their sovereign, led the way to sin,
And shaped their disobedience. On *his* head
Heaven's vengeance only; and for this he pray'd
With an heroic virtue, at the last,
That honor'd his decline. Weary with grief,
The bitter penalty of a stubborn pride—
No longer cheer'd with promises from Heaven,
The voice of sacred prophets, or the signs
Vouchsafed in dreams; or by the mystic rites
Of Thummim and Urim;—with a sense of peace,
He yielded satisfied to the doom that hung
Suspended o'er his head. Another day,
And he should sleep without the harassing dread
That whisper'd the desertion of his God,
The enemy ever, with a fearful dart,
Above his couch of sleep and weariness,
And a new rival ready for his throne!
Better than this so dread anxiety,
The conflict without hope:—and, though despair

Sat heavy at his heart, it took resolve
From the impending circumstance of ill,
And by his natural courage, moved to pride
At the grim presence of his enemy,
Saul girded him for battle. Israel's tents
He pitch'd beside the fountain of Jezreel;
While the Philistines gather'd their great hosts
To Aphek, and defied him with a shout
That spoke their hearts secure of victory.
But naught did this abate his firm resolve,
Which look'd to battle, though it bring defeat,
As the heroic finish to a term,
That lacks but noble ending—not with hope
Of safety or of triumph. His brave youth
Consider'd, and the songs of ancient days
Remember'd, which had shown his thousands slain,
Demanded the last struggles which should fold
The monarch's robes about the hero's form,
And mantle greatly his great overthrow.
Unmoved he heard the shoutings of the foe,
And mock'd them with his own.
"Let us but raise,"
He said to his brave son, Melchishua,
"The courage of our people to the strife,
And though we perish, we may save the throne
To our successor. We shall fall, I know,
Thou with thy brothers, both; and we shall sleep
This night with Kish, our sire, and the great dead
That have prepared the ever-open way
To all the living. Let this fear us not,
While we invoke, with words of ancient might,
And songs, as of a prophet, the spell'd hearts
Of these, our people, waxing faint to hear
Philistia's insolent clamors. Get thee hence,

And pass among the timorous with proud speech,
As of heroic promise. Jonathan
Already seeks them, and Abinadab,
With voice of fire and martial eloquence:
I too, will follow, teaching with a tongue
That soon shall lack all pleasing—of a will
That not the less resolves on valorous deed,
Because it looks, beneath the frown of Heaven,
Upon the dread, inevitable doom!
Go forth and follow in your brothers' steps,
So that our people, warm'd with proper fire,
May seek the battle with that noble rage
Alone that brings success. If we must fall,
It may be Heaven shall suffer us to fall
Like Gaza's blinded captive, sworn on death—
Our mighty foes crush'd with us—in our fate
Proving Philistia's too!"

The battle join'd;
And Israel quail'd before his enemies!
The monarch saw with anguish, and his soul
Put on the wildest courage of despair,
And braved the thickest dangers of the field,
Still in the face of his worst destinies!
The youth of Saul came back to him—the heart
Of fearless valor and vindictive wrath
That led him, desperate through the opposing hosts,
When first upon his head the sacred oil
Was pour'd by Samuel—and the Amorites,
At Jabesh-Gilead, fell before his ire,
That, from the morning watch till noon-day sun,
Still smote their withering hosts. Again he wrought
As in that day of prime; but not as then,
With God's assuring sanction on his deeds.

His valor raged in vain. In vain he threw
Aside the golden helmet—his white beard
And thin, gray locks, still gleaming through the fight,
Unseemly, with that terrible strength of wrath,
Which mark'd the wingéd passage of his darts.
Again he slew his thousands, and his deeds,
More fortunate then, were never in his prime
More glorious than when now, in his old age,
He smote in vain—and from his lofty brow
Felt the green laurels gone.
"Where?"—as he sped,
Still smiting with a weapon drunk with blood—
"Where's Jonathan, my son?—I see him not!"
And on he pass'd. One answer'd him that knew—
"To him the battle has no farther voice,
Nor enemy's weapon terror!"
But one groan
Broke from the monarch's bosom, as he cried—
"Now see I that the day will soon have end;—
God's will be done in mercy!" On he went,
Crossing his dripping spear with other foes,
And trampling o'er his slain.
"I see no more
The shining azure of Melchishua's shield:—
Who marks him in the fight?"
They answer'd him—
"He who, with still a foeman at his throat,
May stop to single from the up-piled dead
The son of Israel's sovereign!"
"How it works,
That fate which I have vainly sought to cross—
That vengeance I have anger'd! Yet, awhile,
Deeds may be done for Israel. If the foe
Must triumph, they shall sing their choral songs

In bitterness, and with a grief that lives
When triumph is forgotten. Thrice the shaft
Hath stricken me"—and he pluck'd an arrow forth,
That, in that moment, quivering in his side,
Stay'd the heroic speech—" but I am proof
'Gainst hate of human foes. They can but slay,
And I am self-deliver'd to the shaft
This day, as one decreed to sacrifice !—
Who calls me from the host ?"
" Oh ! sire, your son,
Abinadab, is smitten, even to death,
And cries on thee for succor !"
" Let him cry,
But fight the while—the succor is at hand,
Certain to come ere sunset."
Thus he sped,
Himself prevailing in the matchless might
Of his one arm, where'er his weapon flew.
Yet still his people quail'd. His sons were slain ;
But he, though smarting with repeated wounds,
Still hew'd a fearful passage through the foe ;
Then turning, with his weapon as a share,
Plough'd the dense field again. His arm, at last,
Fail'd him—the great drops gather'd on his brow,
Mix'd dust, and blood, and water. All in vain
His desperate deeds of valor. On all sides
His people fled discomfited. The war
Went wholly against him, and the hope was gone
That dream'd how Israel's banner yet should rise
Triumphant, though above the sovereign slain !
The progress of the battle had led up
The heights of Gilboa. Here, as Saul beheld
His scatter'd hosts in flight, and, close behind,
The foe pursuing with inveterate rage,

Of murder edged by madness, he stood up
And rested on his spear.
"Why should I fly?"
To those who counsell'd safety. "I have lived
Too long already, having outlived my sons,
My fortunes, and God's favor. Get ye hence,
For Israel's future, and another sway
More blest by Heaven and man. For me, no more
The pomp of royalty, the pride of spears,
The joy that's born of battle, and the songs
That hail the conqueror on his homeward march
Through the great cities. I behold the sun
For the last time, and with no vain regret
That he shall rouse me from my tent no more,
Rejoicing in a day of deeds begun!
Hither to me, thou last of many friends,
And faithfullest of followers. Take thy sword
And thrust me through!—for the Philistines come;
And they must never, with their barbarous rage,
Degrade this conscious form!"
To him who bore
His armor in the battle, thus he spake,
The wounded king of Israel, as below
He saw his enemies gather. Wounded sore,
By their superior archers, well he knew
That neither in flight, nor in the further struggle,
Lay hope of safety. But the man replied—
"Now God forbid that hand of mine be laid,
With violence on the heaven-anointed head!"

"All fail me at my need," reproachfully
Exclaim'd the monarch. Then, as came the foe—
"I will not see their triumph!" cried the king;
And turning his own steel against his breast,

Headlong he threw himself upon the shaft,
And perish'd ere they came! Thus, with like deed,
Died he who bore his armor;—silent both,
As the exulting heathen, up the heights,
Rush'd to the bloody spectacle with shouts,
That ceased when they beheld, beneath their feet,
The mightiest prince in Israel. They were dumb,
As stunn'd by their own triumph—which were naught,
But that the God of Israel was in wrath!

Mournfully sweet the dirge on Gilboa's heights,
Sung by the monarch minstrel, on whose brow
The crown of Saul descended, as he saw
The wreck of that dread battle, and bewept
The royal victims. Never elegy
More touching or more beautiful. How wild
The lyrical sweetness from the Arabian caught,
Which pictured Israel's proud nobility
Perishing in pride and valor, on the heights
Their sacrifice makes sacred!

"How," he sang,
"How are the mighty fallen! Israel's beauty
Slain on high places. Tell it not in Gath,
Lest they, the daughters of Philistia, joy
And triumph o'er God's people—triumph o'er him
Who taught them shame and bitter overthrow!
For thee, Gilboa, let there be no dew
Upon thy summits. Be the rains denied
That crown thy summer fields with offerings;
For on thy heights accurséd the big shield
Of Saul was cast away; by vilest foes
His banner overthrown, and he o'ercome,
As though his mighty head had never been
With heavenly oil anointed. To its sheath

His sword return'd not thirsty. Never, in vain,
He smote the enemies' legions, even at the last,
When God denied the victory to his arm!

"And thou, my brother Jonathan—oh! thou,
Fleet as the roe of the mountain; from whose bow
Never flew fruitless arrow at thy prey,
But in the fat of the mighty, and the blood
Of the warm enemy, made vengeance sure;—
I mourn for thee, my brother, sore distress'd;
For, very pleasant, since I knew thee first,
Hast thou been unto me—thy love to me
Wonderful precious, and surpassing still
The love of woman. Thou, with thy sire,
Hast won the fame of warriors. Thou wast slain,
Like him, on highest places, in the thick
Of fiercest battle—undismay'd, though fate
Refused thee, and thy battle-cry went forth
With the sure knowledge of death against thy hope.

"Lovely and pleasant ever in their lives
Were Saul and Jonathan. Nor in death at last
Are they divided. Kindred in their worth,
Stronger than lions in the battle's rage,
Swifter than eagles in pursuing flight;
Their sweet and sure communion to the close,
Makes them heroic for our histories
So long as fame shall last. Weep for your king,
Daughters of Israel. He it was who first
Ye rescued from the bondage of the foe,
And clad your forms in scarlet; who, with gold,
Deck'd your apparel richly, and first brought
Your hearts to knowledge of still more delights.
How are the mighty fallen!—weapons of war,
How perish'd, and what glorious state o'erthrown?"

THE REBELLION OF ABSALOM.

We pay the mournful penalties of guilt
Long after we forget its pleasant sweets,
And sow, in youth, the bitter seeds of pain,
That age shall reap in sorrow. Thus the king,
Heaven's favorite, when his head was gray with years,
For the impetuous passions of his youth
That led him, though repenting still, to sin,
Found in his best beloved, his Absalom—
The dearest to his heart of many sons—
A resolute rebel; seeking with bared arms
And deadliest weapon, after Israel's crown,
Pluck'd from his sire's gray head. From him he stole,
By subtle arts and guilty agencies,
The affections of his people; till, grown strong,
He shook away the webs of policy,
And standing fearless forth, proclaim'd himself
The rightful king in Israel. Through the land
The trumpet voices of sedition rang—
"Absalom reigns in Hebron!" He had snared
His father's nearest counsellors, and had stolen
His way to hearts, forgetful of their faith,
Solemnly sworn to David; while his power
Shook to its centre the great realm which Heaven
Had built up under Saul, and made secure
In hands more worthy and more fortunate.
An hour sufficed—so suddenly it fell—
To spread sedition's tempest o'er the land,

And drive the monarch, unprepared, in flight,
Forth from his royal city. O'er the brook,
Kedron, he sped by night. Through secret paths
He sought strange places. Day by day he went,
While bitter tears, slow coursing down his cheeks,
Declared how bitter was the pang that found
A traitor in a favorite—rebel foe
In the dear pledge of a most faithful love,
The child of his best manhood. Thus he went,
With cover'd head, and feet made bare, in grief,
Up the steep sides of Olivet; while they
Who follow'd, with a rare fidelity,
Took a like form of mourning to their hearts,
And echo'd all his woes. Ere many days,
God heard his prayers, and wrought, by human means,
Confusion to the counsels of the son,
Who, in his desperate thirst for evil sway,
Sought equally his father's life and crown.
Meanwhile, the faithful of the tribes drew nigh,
In succor of the sovereign. Soon his hosts,
Number'd and train'd by Joab, the strong man
And savage warrior, were prepared to plant,
On the high hill-top, in the face of foes,
The Zion banner. Unto Mahanaim
Then David came. Here number'd he his troops;
And when he sent them forth to seek the strife,
He said to his great captains:—
"For my sake,
Deal gently with the youth—with Absalom!"
His people listen'd as he spake. They saw
The weight of his great sorrows in his face,
His stooping form, the dust upon his brow,
And the deep mourning tremors in his voice.
Mightiest in numbers was the rebel host,

Which, seeking battle with an eager rage,
Drew nigh unto the army of the king.
Absalom cross'd the Jordan. Here he made
Amasa captain of his force—a chief,
Kinsman to Joab, fearless as himself,
And with as keen an appetite for blood.
The armies met in Gilead. Ephraim's wood
Beheld the dread encounter, while heaven's arm,
Sustaining the mock'd fortunes of the sire,
Fought 'gainst the rebel legions till they fled
With twenty thousand slain. The fell pursuit
Traversed the thicket with devouring sword,
That slew where'er it came. Then Absalom,
Lost in the intricate mazes of the wood,
Was seen by David's people as he sought
A refuge from pursuit. But they had heard
The entreaty of the sire to deal with him,
For his sake, gently; and they dropp'd their spears,
And turn'd their wrathful eyes on meaner foes.

Not so with Joab. He preferr'd to save
The monarch from the sire. He knew the heart
Of Absalom—his restless vanity,
The ready ear he gave to counsellors
That taught him rude rebellion; and he knew,
That, spared to other days, was but to spare
For worse rebellions still. When that he heard
Where Absalom was gather'd, he, alone,
Subduing in his soul the entreating voice
Of the old father, pleading for the son,
Sought out the unhappy fugitive. With arm
That never, or through fear or sympathy,
Had yet been taught to falter—through his heart
He thrust the unerring javelin till he died!

Then sounded Joab, the fierce conqueror,
The trumpet that recall'd the wild pursuit;
For he that would not spare the king's own son.
Yet knew to spare his people. He had shorn
The head of the offending; for the rest,
They had already, in their thousands slain,
Paid the sufficient penalty of crime.

All day, even from the hour when forth the host
Went at his bidding, had the monarch sat
Between the city gates, with mourning brow
And heart, misgiving of the fearful tale
He soon must yield to hear. The watchman stood
In the high tower above, far looking forth,
Intent, for messenger of good or ill.
And soon he came, for when was messenger
That spoke of evil, slow?
"Thy foes, O king!
This day have been deliver'd to thy hand!"
"But of the young man? What of Absalom?"
"May all the foes that rise against the king,
To do him mischief, share the young man's fate!"

Then burst the anguish of the agéd sire,
Forgetting all the king.
"Oh! Absalom,
Would God that I had died for thee, my son!"
Thus wailing, he ascended from the gate
And wept within the tower, until they brought
The mangled, but still beautiful form of him
Best loved, and stretch'd him on a bier of state
Even in the chamber where the monarch lay,
Prone to the dusty floor, no more a king,
Ashes upon his head and in his heart.

Still was the young man beautiful. His corse
Might still delight the eye. No blemish marr'd
The perfect symmetry of the lofty form
And the fine, noble features, save the wound
That still'd his heart forever. They had wash'd
The blood stains from his bosom ere they brought;
Had smooth'd in wonted flow and natural curl
The long fair hair, that was his grace and pride,
As Samson's was his strength. They had removed
His armor, helm, and shield, and bloody spear,
Ere they had placed him 'neath the eyes of him
Whose state these proofs had outraged; had disposed
His limbs in pure white garments; and he lay
Serene as one who sleeps a pleasant sleep,
Untroubled by a dream. As thus he slept,
The sire, no longer hush'd by curious gaze,
Sunk o'er the unconscious body of the son,
And clasp'd it to his breast. Then gush'd his eyes
With tears, and spoke his bursting heart with sobs
That shook his mighty frame.

"Oh! Absalom,
My son!—my son!—that wast so beautiful—
That art so beautiful, though in thy shroud,
With death's hand heavy on thy cold pale brow—
Thou, grievously misnamed thy father's peace,
That still hast been his woe; and now with pangs
But ill remind'st me of those happy hours,
When in thy mother, fair Macaiah's arms,
I felt in Geshur respite from my griefs,
And named thee, at thy birth, from my own peace,
Which thou hast still destroy'd. Oh! Absalom,
Why hast thou brought me to this woe, my son?
Thyself to this sad fate? To thee my heart
Turn'd ever with a preference, most unwise,

Over more faithful children. Still, in thee,
As pledge of precious loves and peaceful hours,
I found a joy that grew upon thy sight,
And my heart swam in rapture but to view
Thy stately shape, the graces of thy walk,
And the soul-beauty kindling in thy face!
Yet wast thou guilty and ungrateful still—
A rebel in thy service—treacherous
Even when most trusted. But alas! for me,
I cannot now reproach thee, Absalom,
Thou hear'st me not—thou canst rebel no more.
Would I had died for thee beneath the shaft,
Or, at the peril of my life, could now
But give thee back thy own. My son!—my son!—
Would God that I could die for thee, my son!

"What had I done to thee that thou shouldst fly
My presence, and take weapons in thy hand
Against these thin white hairs? Seeking this sway,
That, as thou seest, saves not from any grief;
Which, where the affections still abide with power,
Is still as open to the shafts of harm
As any subject breast. What was thy grief?
What wrong was done to thee? What favor'd voice
Spoke in thy father's ear against thy peace,
That thou couldst not o'erplead? I spared thee still,
When, at the cruel feast of Baal-Hazor,
Thou slew'st thy brother Amnon. I forbore,
Though, in thy lust of power, I saw thee take
A state upon thyself, and dignities
Unfitting son and subject: and I yearn'd,
Even in my secret soul, to see thee wear
This empire for thyself. Alas! my son,
Why, in thy youth and beauty, didst thou strive

Against thy father's love?—'gainst Heaven's decree.
Till thou call'dst down its bolts, my Absalom,
Stricken with the cruel death-dart in thy breast,
Making me desolate! Oh! erring Absalom,
Rebellious, seeking thy fond father's life,
And perishing in thy beauty and thy guilt—
Would I had died for thee, my son!—my son!

"Alas! thou hear'st not. Couldst thou hear, my voice
Should fill thine ear with chiding—but in vain!
I feel the echoes of my words come back,
Though breathed upon thy breast, as from a vault
Where all is dark and hollow. Death, I know,
Is on thee—on this brow where youth before
Had set her richest beauties—on thy tongue,
Which ever in music spake, even when its speech
Had birth in youthful passion, which misled
Too frequently the heart, that 'neath my hand,
Sleeps without pulse of feeling or of fear,
Having no passion more.
"Ah! they will come,
And deck thee for a chamber where no eyes
Shall look upon thy beauties—where, to see,
Were to feel fear and loathing. They will bear
Thy form from my embrace, and I shall go
To homes which thou shalt enter nevermore!
Oh! Absalom, my son, this had not been—
This fate of silence unto thee—this fear
Of human strifes and voices unto me—
But for the vain ambition which had birth
Even in thy strength and beauty. We must part:
Even now I hear the voices at the gate,
Of those who come to take thee to thy couch,
Whose cold thou shalt not feel. The chants arise

From drooping handmaids, who shall time thy steps
To vaults no song shall penetrate but mine.
My victory is mourning. All my host
Fly, scatter'd as a host that feels defeat,
Knowing how great thy father's agony,
Which still they dread to see. My people fly
The city which I cover with my shame,
Though to their fond fidelity this day
I owe my life and empire—saved in vain,
At price of thy most precious life, my son!
I must throw by the semblance of this grief,
And wear it in mine heart. I must put on
The aspect of the monarch and the man,
Lest I do wrong to champions, in whose faith
My crown is made secure. Joab will come
And chide me for this weakness, which declares
How happier it had left me to behold
My perishing hosts o'erthrown and stark in death,
Than the one rebel, whose unnatural power
Makes his life dearer to the heart it wrongs,
Than all Heaven's gifts beside. Alas! too true!
I leave thee, Absalom!—I tear away
From thy detaining fingers. They will take
And hide thee from my sight; and I shall sway,
Once more, the sceptre that thou took'st from me—
Sway with calm forehead and untrembling hand—
Though in the watches of the night, as now,
The voice of my great sorrow cries aloud,
My son, for thee—belovéd Absalom—
Would God that I had died for thee, my son!"

FRANCESCA DA RIMINI.

EPISODE FROM DANTE.

The following is a new version of the fifth canto of Dante's "Inferno," which contains the famous episode of Francesca da Rimini, in which she narrates the manner and the misfortunes of her love. She was the daughter of the Lord of Ravenna, and was married to Gianciotto, the eldest son of the tyrant of Rimini. Unhappily, her affections did not go with her duties. She did not love her husband, but bestowed her heart upon Paoli, a younger son of the house of Malatesta; and still more unhappily, forgot her vows in her passion. Her husband surprised and slew the guilty pair, who were buried together in the same grave. These parties are discovered by Dante, as he passes under the guidance of Virgil, whom he denominates "his master," into the "second circle," which first opens the view of the infernal regions and the terrible sufferings of the inmates. Here Minos sits, at the threshold, and determines, at a glance, the particular doom of the guilty spirits. Those who occupy this first circle are such as have fallen victims to their carnal appetites. Here they are tossed incessantly to and fro, in a region of "brown horror," by fierce and capricious winds, the likeness of their own passions, to which they can offer no resistance. Here, as examples of such as occupy this circle, they discern first the famous Queen of Babylon, Semiramis. In this "band" or circle, are Dido, Cleopatra, Helena, Achilles and others, a vast and well-remembered multitude. Two of these guilty victims, in particular, compel the attention of Dante, as they are borne forward, seeming particularly light upon the tempestuous winds. These are Francesca, and Paoli, her lover. He summons them, at the instance of Virgil; and the sympathy which he shows them prevails upon Francesca to relate their story, she speaking for both. Dante is so much affected by the narrative and by the agonies which Paoli all the while expresses, that he swoons away lifelessly. This is all that is necessary to a proper understanding of the episode. It contains several of the most frequently-quoted passages from Dante—passages singularly suggestive and comprehensive—and affords as just an idea of his manner as could be gathered from any portion of his divine poem. The measure employed here is that of the original, *the terza rima;* and the number of the lines is nearly the same, Dante's being 142, and this 140.

From the first circle thus descending down,
I pass'd into the next of smaller space,
But deeper torment and superior groan.
There horrible Minos sits, with mocking face,
Watching the entrance for the criminal,
Whom, judged, he quick dispatches without grace.
Near him, the ill-born shade confesses all:

Soul-searcher, he discovers, as he eyes,
To what dire mansion it is doom'd to fall,
And with his spiral snake extremities
Coiling around him, shows how far below,
To what degree of doom the spirit hies.
Ever before him stand a crowd, who go,
Each, headlong down to judgment; they are heard,
And hear, and then speed whirling into woe.
"Oh! thou"—to me then Minos yielded word,
As, seeing me, his office he forebore—
"Look where thou go'st, and whom thou hast preferr'd
To be thy guide; and seek no open door,
Won by its wideness." To him, then, my guide:
"Why wouldst thou hinder that he should explore?
Such is his mission, will'd, where power beside
May do what still it wills. No farther ask."
And now mine ears began to open wide
To dolorous complaints. My sorrowful task
Now led me forward where the numerous wail
Assail'd me; and, as cover'd with Night's mask,
I pass'd into a region full of bale,
Mute of all light, and raging like the sea,
Torn by conflicting winds in bellowing gale.
The infernal tempest, from its coil ne'er free,
Still toss'd the distracted spirits in its sweep,
Sore whirl'd and vex'd, incapable to flee;
Dash'd 'gainst their rocks of ruin, curses deep
Blaspheme the power divine; and all is moan,
Bitter lament, and woes that wail, not weep.
Such was the doom; capricious thus; and borne
By fitful blasts through the unlighted air,
Were those who, by tempestuous passions torn,
Yield reason up to lust: so starlings bear,
Abroad in wintry storms, a trooping host,

Hither and thither, powerless, as they veer.
Hope of less pain, or of repose, thus tost,
No comfort brings; but as the cranes depart
With mournful chant, and streaking the lone sky,
So borne by the impetuous blasts, thus dart
These shadowy hosts with mournful scream and cry.
"Master," I then, with great concern of heart,
"What are these people, shrieking piteously,
Whom the keen wind thus lashes?" He replied—
"She that first comes was queen of many lands:
With lust corrupt, she made the laws provide
That vice should show for virtue. Her commands
Shaped the decree to favor the denied—
Semiramis, who, held in golden bands,
Of Ninus, was his mother, and his wife,
And kept her rule where sways the Soldan now.
Who comes with her is she who, in love's strife,
To ashes of Sichœus broke her vow,
And, with self-slaughtering hand, smote her own life.
The next is Cleopatra." Then I saw
Helen, who for so long a time of ill
Prevail'd; and great Achilles came, who fought
With love the last; Paris, Tristan; and still
Thousands beside, of whom "the master" taught,
Naming them as they rose, whom Love's sad will
Had smitten from our life. Then, as full fraught,
He told the story of old cavaliers,
And noble dames thus ruin'd, pity stole
Upon and conquer'd me; and, in my tears,
Bewilder'd, and with melancholy soul,
I spake: "The cloud, O Bard, that now appears,
Hath two that go together, and do roll
Most light before the wind—with them awhile
I willingly would speak." "When they draw nigh"—

Thus did he answer me—"then shalt thou wile
With adjuration of love—for still they fly
Obedient to the passion which did beguile—
And they will come to thee." Soon as mine eye
Beheld them borne toward us on the blast,
I cried with lifted voice: "If none withholds,
Oh! wearied souls, come hither to us and speak."
Then as two doves whom one desire enfolds,
Fly with twin pinion their sweet nest to seek,
So those two spirits whom one will embolds,
From the same circle which doth Dido keep—
Such was the power of my appealing cry—
Came to us, borne through the malignant air.
"Oh! being most gracious, whose benignant eye
Thus seeks us through this sooty atmosphere—
We who stain'd earth with deep and bloody dye—
If we had favor with heaven, our earnest prayer
Were for thy peace, seeing that on our woe
Thou hast had ruth. Of that which thou wouldst say,
Or that which it would please thee best to know,
Speak freely—we will answer as we may,
The blast as now being still.—Beside the Po,
Where seeking kindred waters he must stray,
My native city sits. Love, which in breast
Of tenderness is ever quickly caught
With that fair form, no more by me possess'd,
Won *him;* and still with grief my soul is fraught
By that sweet prize. Love, which in all confess'd,
Leaves none escape from passion, strongly taught
My heart to joy in him, with such delight
As leaves me not even yet. Love to one death
Conducted both; but Cain's deep realm of fright
Waits him whose cruel vengeance quench'd our breath."
Thus spake they. When that I had heard each sprite,

I bowed me, till at last the Poet saith—
"What think'st thou?" And I answer'd him—"Ah, me!
What were the sweet dreams, what the longings dear
That led them to this fate and misery?"
To them I turn'd—"Francesca, look—the tear
Flows for thy grief. Yet farther would I see—
How Love, in season of youth's sweetest care,
First taught thy heart its dubious want to know."
Then she to me replied—"The greatest grief
Is to remember in our hours of woe
How blest we have been. He can tell, thy chief;
But if thou will'st that I the story show
Of love's first shoots in the beginning leaf,
I will, as one who tells but weeps, relate.
One day together as we sat alone,
We read for pastime of knight Lancelot's fate—
How Love compell'd him. Nothing had we known
To wake suspicion of our mutual state;
Yet, as our eyes met, from our cheeks had flown
The color as we read. The moment came
Which conquer'd both. 'Twas where we found that he
Kiss'd on the cheek the sweet smile of his dame:
Even then *he* kiss'd *my* mouth all tremblingly.
The book was Galleotto. Such the name
Of him who wrote. But in that volume we
Read nothing more that day." While thus one sprite
Reveal'd, the other wept; and with such woe,
That, in my sorrow at so sad a sight,
I fainting sunk, as if beneath the blow
Of Death, and in my anguish fell outright,
As the dead body, hopelessly, falls low.

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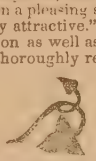

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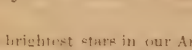

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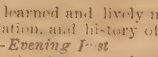

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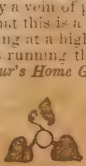

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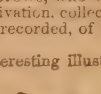

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